

Workers of the World, Unite!

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Bolivia

Secretariat of the C.C. of the Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR Bolivia)

The Rise of the Fascist Oligarchy to the Government in Bolivia

On the night of Monday, November 11, the High Command of the Armed Forces militarized the country; the streets were occupied by paramilitaries, soldiers and tanks, while light aircraft and helicopters flew over the Bolivian sky. President Evo Morales had already resigned his office, along with the Vice President and the Presidents of both Houses of the Legislative Assembly. On November 12, in an empty parliament, the military high command placed the presidential sash over right-wing senator Jeanine Añez, as they proclaimed God's return to the presidential palace. The fascist oligarchy under the command of Yankee imperialism fulfilled its objective of regaining the direct exercise of political power in Bolivia.

It is important for us to carry out a deep study on the basis of Marxism-Leninism of the rise of the fascist oligarchy to the government; this is not an isolated event in time and space, but a product of the objective and subjective conditions in the country. The populist government of Evo Morales handed over the country to the fascist hordes on a silver platter. During 14 years of government, it facilitated its economic growth, it coexisted with its shock groups, it disorganized the working class and peasantry, and it repressed the popular movement that was fighting for its legitimate demands. In the context of a dispute between imperialist powers for control of the region's economy, it was the peoples of Bolivia who paid with their blood for the new redivision of the country's natural resources.

In our time, the problem does not arise of copying the revisionist pseudo-socialist theories, or of inventing new socialist theories. Socialism exists and is developing both as a theory and as a practice. It has accumulated a wealth of historical experience, summed up in the Marxist-Leninist theory, the vitality of which has been con-firmed in life. By relying on this scientific theory and applying it in the conditions of each country, the revolutionary forces will find the correct road to socialism.

– Enver Hoxha

From “Marxism-Leninism – An Ever Young and Scientific Doctrine,”

in *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 773

“21st century socialism,” “communitarian socialism” or “vivir bien” (well-being – a term coined by Evo Morales’ government) has failed on a regional level. There is no socialism without socialization of the means of production, without the seizure of power by the working class, without changing the capitalist relations of production. The slogans of “complementarity” that the MAS-IPSP (Movement for Socialism – Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples) government proclaimed from the upper echelons during 14 years in fact represented a clear policy of class conciliation. The “process of change” of Evo Morales was nothing more than the modernization of the bourgeois state (including the repressive apparatus) and the demobilization of the popular organizations.

The conflicts unleashed in the first years of the Morales government, between the central state and the so-called “half moon” (a crescent-shaped grouping of four departments in eastern Bolivia that is the center of the right-wing – *translator’s note*) were resolved with the social pact between the MAS-IPSP and the oligarchy in the new State Political Constitution. The constitutional text that was approved in the Constituent Assembly was negotiated in a parliamentary com-



mission, which strengthened guarantees for big private property. Paramilitary groups such the Santa Cruz Youth Union, which raised their heads with their racist and hateful actions, reached agreements with the MAS-IPSP to become government youth groups. The large landowners benefited from a series of laws that guaranteed their ownership of lands whose size exceeded constitutional limits. The laws regarding private banking and the financial sector were negotiated between the MAS-IPSP government and the representatives of the bankers. The growth of the financial sector during the 14 years of the Morales government exceeded 375%; instead of fighting the oligarchy, populism created the conditions for it to grow and develop.

In the heroic days of 2003-2005, the organized people defeated the traditional neoliberal parties; the workers and peasants were at the head of the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB) and the Unified Trade Union Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia (CSUTCB); the Marxist-Leninist Party that takes the leadership of these struggles and guides them towards the seizure of power did not yet exist. During the 14 years of MAS-IPSP these union leaderships were co-opted, bought off and divided by the government. The disorganized people did not have the necessary tools to present a systematic resistance to the coup, their leaders lacked legitimacy with the rank-and-file, the organizations lost internal democracy and institutionality.

The popular movements fought against oil exploration, against the building of highways and hydroelectric plants without consultation, against the corruption of local authorities, for a bigger education and health budget, among other things. The accumulation of legitimate demands of various social sectors of the country that were harshly repressed, found a common slogan when the Constitutional Court ignored the popular will expressed in the constitutional referendum of February 21, 2016, in which the majority of the voters rejected the change that would have made the re-election of Morales possible. The inability of the forces of the revolutionary left to influence and become the vanguard of the social struggles allowed the reactionary forces to capitalize on social unrest.

The 2019 general elections mark a turning point in Bolivian politics. National regulations state that the team of President and Vice President that wins 50% + 1 of the votes or a vote greater than 40% with at least 10% more than the next candidate, wins. On election night, the rapid transmission of electoral results was suspended for 24 hours, with a difference of less than 10% between Morales and the

main opposition candidate (Mesa); this resulted in massive protests and confrontations at the national level, with the burning and destruction of electoral headquarters commanded by paramilitary groups. From the technical point of view, there are a series of studies (University of Michigan, MIT, OAS, among others) regarding the statistical trend and computer management during the key hours of the election. There is no doubt that the computer system subcontracted to a private entity did not have the minimum security conditions for a national election. There is evidence of electoral fraud although the degree of this is not precise. The protests against electoral fraud that lasted 21 days led to the hegemony of the oligarchic right-wing. Racist, regionalist and religious fundamentalist hate speeches made possible the resurgence of the “half moon” paramilitary groups of 2007-09.

The change in the influences of the imperialist powers was seen in the country in the fight for control of the lithium of the Uyuni Salt Flat, the iron of Mutun and the hydrocarbons. Throughout the whole conflict that was unleashed, the embassies of the United States, the European Union and Brazil, together with the envoys of the OAS, played a decisive role. The OAS Secretary General, Almagro, publicly endorsed the “right” of Evo Morales to be re-elected, passing over the Constitution. When the fast vote count was suspended, the first ones consulted by the MAS-IPSP government were representatives of the embassies of the U.S., European Union and Brazil. These same embassies, together with the Catholic Church, the right-wing parties, the Pro-Santa Cruz Civic Committee and CONADE (National Committee for the Defense of Democracy) decided behind closed doors that Añez would be self-proclaimed as President.

The coup regime of Añez is an organic representative of the country's most reactionary oligarchy, whose party barely had 4% support in the 2019 elections, and wasted no time in coming down with a heavy hand against the people. With the cowardice of Morales and his entourage in fleeing the country, the popular movement bravely resisted the fascist bullets and repression in the Sacaba and Senkata massacres. With more than 35 dead, 800 wounded and 2000 arrested, the peasant and popular movement made it clear that there is no evil that lasts a hundred years nor a people that will tolerate it.

The oligarchy has demonstrated its sell-out intentions, in the few months that it has illegitimately occupied state power, and it has already been involved in several corruption scandals and frontal attacks

on state enterprises (among them the country's flagship airline – Boliviana de Aviación, and the telecommunications company Entel). The ministerial cabinet today is made up of former executives of the big banks and the agro-industrial conglomerates. Official acts are conducted in the presence of medieval bibles, candles and crucifixes, with which the authorities are sworn in (despite the fact that Bolivia is constitutionally a secular state). Given the minimal threat of social protests, the regime does not hesitate to reinforce the militarization of the country, claiming the existence of an internal enemy (terrorists, leftists, drug-traffickers, communists, Marxists, etc.) The general elections have been suspended indefinitely, under the pretext of the COVID-19 health crisis.

Groups that proclaim leftist ideologies, what they want is power because they are financed by drug-terrorism; they must be identified, persecuted, surrounded and defeated.

– Jeanine Añez

For the Marxist-Leninists it is clear that there can be no revolution without an armed people and there is no socialism without the socialization of the means of production. In this new political context, we communists have the task of supporting the independent organization of the popular movement, propagating the program of struggle and strengthening the ranks of the Party in order to combat the fascist oligarchic regime that has usurped state power in Bolivia. It opens the way to the regrouping of the popular movement for anti-fascist resistance, the fight against neoliberal measures, the defense of the natural resources and state enterprises. The Second Plenum of the Central Committee of our Party has given clear directions for the anti-fascist struggle, with its sights set on building a patriotic and popular alternative for national liberation.

March 2020

Brazil

Luis Falcão

Revolutionary Communist Party – PCR Brazil

How to Advance Our Work with the Masses?

"They [the Bolsheviks], like Antaeus (a hero of Greek mythology), are strong because they maintain connection with their mother, the masses who gave birth to them, suckled them and reared them. And as long as they maintain connection with their mother, with the people, they have every chance of remaining invincible."

J. Stalin, at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,
March 1939

Among those fighting for an end to the exploitation and oppression of the capitalist system and for a true socialist revolution in our country, there is no doubt that the Workers Party, the PT, has become a social-democratic party and that its objective it is only to minimize the evils caused by capitalism. Proof of this are the last interviews of former President Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva, affirming that the PT has no self-criticism to make and that its objective is to govern "for all the people, both for the banker and the bank worker, for the landowner and the rural worker. What people have to know is that I will govern like the heart of a mother" (UOL – Universo On Line, January 26, 2020). He doesn't know that both the bank worker and the rural worker, as well as the whole of society, would live much better if the banker and the landowner were expropriated, that is, if the banks, the land and the main means of production were under the control of the workers instead of belonging to a minority.

In addition, as we know, many PT leaders began to make enriching themselves one of their life goals and got involved in deals. The telecommunications company Oi and Gamecorp, a company of Fábio Luís Lula da Silva, the son of former president Lula, is involved in one of these deals. From 2004 to 2016, in the period in which the PT was in the government, Oi invested a total of 82.8 million reais

[about \$15 million US] in Gamecorp and won 6.8 million reales [about \$1.2 million US] in court for a loan made ten years ago.

The Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B) is also following the same path. In addition to proclaiming that its model of socialism is the super-exploitative Chinese capitalism, it decided to take off the mask that it used to hide its betrayal of the working class, removing the word “communist,” as well as the hammer and sickle from its emblem. This is just consistent with what it had already abandoned in practice, Marxism-Leninism. When it occupied the Ministry of Defense, it did not tire of praising and paying tribute to the Armed Forces, the same ones that tortured, murdered and hid the bodies of the Araguaia guerrillas.

Stopping the struggles

As a consequence of this policy of class conciliation, in the past two decades these parties have acted as a brake on the advance of the struggles of the working masses. Their housing movements were no longer carrying out any more occupations and the CUT [United Workers’ Federation] and the CTB [Workers’ Federation of Brazil] preferred to associate with Força Sindical [Trade Union Force] to defend the subsidy for the employers and negotiate voluntary layoffs instead of organizing strikes. Even the peasant movements were affected and land occupations were decreasing year by year. Even worse was the National Union of Students (UNE) and the Brazilian Union of Secondary Students (UBES) that, from organizations that were representative of and recognized by students, are today bureaucratized and are losing the leading role in the struggle of the Brazilian



youth.

For all this, the victorious strike of the oil workers organized by the United Federation of Oil Workers (FUP) and by the Unions takes on extraordinary importance. After 20 days of paralysis and despite the fact that the bourgeois press concealed it, they defeated the intransigence and intolerance of the director of Petrobras and the Higher Labor Court, winning some gains.

But despite having suffered electoral defeats and working to prevent the advance of the workers and popular struggles (the strike against the Pension Reform, last year, lasted just one day), the PT continues to have a relative influence over the masses, a consequence of the struggles that took place in the 1980s and 1990s, and of having control of the country's main trade union organizations.

However, there is no point in regretting or recognizing this betrayal. It is necessary to act and work daily to win over the masses and attract them to revolutionary positions. Only with the revolutionary work among the masses will these sectors emerge from inertia and transform disillusionment and frustration with social democracy into the fight against the bosses, the exploitation by the bourgeoisie and the immediate end of the fascist government.

How to link with the masses?

So how should one overcome that influence of social-democracy over the masses? Lenin's notes in *The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions*¹ provide important lessons for revolutionary communists on how to carry out work among the people. He says:

"Contact with the masses:

- Live right among the workers
- Judge their mood
- Know all about them
- Understand the masses
- Know how to approach them
- Win their boundless confidence
- Leaders must not be isolated from the masses or from the army of labor."

¹ V. I. Lenin. "The Role and Function of the Trade Unions under the New Economic Policy," *Collected Works*, Vol. 33 [translated from the Spanish].

We note that Lenin presents as the first question something apparently simple: "Live right among the workers". This is the first step to link oneself with the masses, because, living among the people, we will be closer to them and we will have a concrete idea of their difficulties and their lives. The place where we live is not, therefore, an issue without importance or that has no relation to our work among the masses. This decision will bring us closer or lead us further away from the masses. On the other hand, living among the people must also be understood as working in a factory enterprise and living daily among the workers.

Lenin's second point is to judge the mood of the masses. It is not possible to give an order, propose a particular action and we cannot expect it to be carried out only on the basis of our will; it is necessary to know the disposition of those who are the really fundamental force for the transformation of society. Therefore, to be successful in working with the masses, we need to know their disposition, their state of mind, have a precise idea of their living and working conditions, their desires and state of mind.

Understanding the masses and knowing how to deal with them are other important points emphasized by Lenin. In fact, it is impossible to approach the masses correctly if we do not understand them. Therefore, it is essential to deeply understand their needs and difficulties, what worries them and concerns them.

But that knowledge will only be valid for our work if we know how to approach the masses. In fact, knowing how to approach them is perhaps the main concern of a revolutionary communist when he carries out his work with the rank-and-file. To reach out to the masses and gain their attention requires that we be deeply human, be aware that the people are intelligent, have the ability to discern, think, reflect, and have opinions, and we will not change them simply because we want them to. For these changes to occur, one must present facts, elements, identify what leads them to think in this way and have self-control in order to present our arguments and ideas.

Many people believe that since the party is the vanguard of the working masses, what its activists defend in a beautiful speech will automatically be accepted by the people. To act like this is to fail to be the vanguard and not understand that only with persuasion we will be able to convince the masses and lead them to action. To educate and raise the consciousness of the masses, it is necessary, first of all,

to establish an identity or, as some prefer, a connection, between the vanguard and the masses.

**Without the direct participation of the masses,
there will be no revolution**

Lenin always made it very clear that, in order to carry out a revolution, the vanguard must be decisive and firm, but he has also stressed that it is not possible to carry it out if the oppressed and the exploited do not want it, if there is no raising of the consciousness of millions and millions of workers. In other words, for the victory of the revolution it is necessary to have the sympathy and support of the majority of the oppressed and exploited. Now, that goal can only be achieved through the experience of the masses, through speaking with the people, hearing them, listening carefully to their complaints, establishing a relationship of equality, with people of the same class and who have a common interest.

Furthermore, the role of the popular masses in the transformation of society is greater than that of any individual; therefore, the task of the communists is not to replace what is irreplaceable, but to reveal to the workers the contradictions of capitalist society, to explain why the boss is rich and the worker or peasant is poor, the causes of unemployment and low wages, to spread the ideas of socialism and revolution and to contribute to the development and organization of the workers and popular movement. In other words, we will not achieve our objectives except through persuasion, fraternal and respectful conversation with the people, burying all vanity, arrogance and communist vainglory².

The last element, winning the boundless confidence of the masses, will only come if we strictly go along with the points presented by Lenin. That is, if we live in the midst of the people, if we know how to approach the masses correctly and fight alongside them, we will win the boundless confidence of the masses.

It is also important to emphasize that the connection with the masses must be developed before, during and after the struggles have taken place. Indeed, it is common that there are comrades who do a good job of persuasion, who manage to win the confidence of the

² Communist vainglory means, says Lenin, that a member of the Communist Party imagines that he can solve all problems by issuing Communist decrees. *Foundations of Leninism*, J. Stalin.

masses and develop the struggles, achieving important victories. However, after the triumph of these struggles, they stand aside or disengage themselves from the masses, cease to live together with them and act as if the struggle of the communists was not to transform society and make the revolution, but simply for partial demands and reforms. As Lenin says in his article “On Confounding Politics with Pedagogics”: “It is our duty always to intensify and broaden our work and influence among the masses... for weakness in this work is *always* one of the causes of the proletariat’s defeat”. Thus, the work of the party among the masses is a permanent work and its continuity is fundamental for the success of the revolution.

To fulfill these tasks, our party must have prepared, self-sacrificing, and ready cadres, cadres who are trained in party meetings, in the study of Marxism-Leninism, in practical work with the masses, in the preparation of their meetings, assemblies, mobilizations and struggles. Cadres who can overcome over-confidence and arrogance and who are willing to learn from the masses and not just teach them.

Of course, we should not expect the influence of social-democracy to evaporate overnight or to come to an end after the social democrats lose one or another election. We cannot and should not feed this illusion, because only when our link with the masses deepens and there is absolute confidence in the revolutionary alternative that we defend and represent, will the reformist and revisionist parties be crushed. In other words, if we go hand in hand with the people, sooner or later, depending on the tempo of our work, the working class and people will believe in their own strength and the popular revolution.

We are confident that by following these correct and important points of Lenin, we will take decisive steps to deepen our ties with the masses. It is a work that requires love for the people, self-denial and confidence in the victory of the revolution, but without a doubt, when we succeed, this work will make our Revolutionary Communist Party strong and invincible.

Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party –
PCR Brazil
March 2020

Burkina Faso

Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta

The evolution of the situation in Burkina Faso:

The COVID 19 pandemic, an aggravating element of the crisis of the neocolonial system

The situation remains complex in the context of the strengthening of the imperialist domination, of the deepening of the crisis of the imperialist system, and of their dramatic consequences for the working class, the working masses in urban and rural areas, and popular youth.

The people's daily lot includes the high cost of living, the endemic unemployment, misery, and health problems with the persistence of epidemics such as measles and malaria.

The MPP (People's Movement for Progress) government is clearly showing its inability to resolve the pressing problems of the masses and to fulfill their expectations, which were strongly expressed during the popular uprising of October 2014. On all fronts, among which the impunity of blood crimes and of economic crimes, the absence of democratic freedoms, the low purchasing power, the high level of insecurity, the government is carrying out the same reactionary, anti-popular and anti-social policies of the defunct regime of the autocrat Blaise Compaoré, who was driven out by the popular insurrection.

The government continues to apply the roadmap dictated by French imperialism, which consists in guaranteeing the geostrategic interests of France in our country and in the West Africa sub-region, where it faces the rivalry of other imperialist powers (US, China, Germany, Russia, etc.) and of countries such as India, Turkey and Brazil. The most important element in this roadmap is to stifle the resistance and revolutionary spirit of the people, who have forcefully shown their potential during the popular insurrection and the resistance to the fascist coup d'état of General Diendéré in September 2015.

This explains the repressive measures taken against the Democratic and Revolutionary Movement, the attacks against the trade unions by criminalizing their struggles, the arbitrary arrests and deten-

tions of citizens, the targeted assassinations of activists such as the two members of the ODJ (Democratic Youth Organization) in Yagha province in the north of the country in May 2019, the extrajudicial executions of innocent civilians by the Defense and Security Forces under the pretext of fighting terrorism, which have caused the deaths and wounding of dozens of people, crimes which have gone totally unpunished.

The people also face the terrorist attacks from various armed groups, which are components of the counter-revolution. These include elements linked to the defunct regime of the Fourth Republic, which was swept away by the popular insurrection. Since 2015, these recurring attacks have occurred in various regions of the country, causing a real humanitarian catastrophe which has plunged these populations into a state of great despair. The macabre toll is the following: hundreds of civilians and members of the Defense and Security Forces were killed, tens of thousands were injured, nearly 800,000 persons became internally displaced people, who have been crammed into makeshift camps and live in total destitution. Many health centers and schools have been destroyed, depriving thousands of children living in areas of great insecurity of schooling.

Under the pretext of fighting terrorism, the imperialist powers militarily occupy our country and the entire Sahel Sahara sub-region with their troops, their military bases and the instruments of domination they control such as the G5 Sahel, Operation Barkhane, MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali).

The democratic and revolutionary movement is continuing its



work of mobilization and organization in this complex situation, in which the counter-revolution is seen at various levels: jihadist groups, militias and death squads used by the MPP government and the various fractions of the reactionary bourgeoisie, the repression by the Defense and Security Forces against the people's struggles, and the military presence of the imperialist powers in the country.

The neocolonial state has completely given up its role of defending the territorial integrity and the security of goods and people, despite its posturing and declarations against terrorism.

The measures introduced in this context, such as the establishment of a curfew and of a state of emergency in the northern and eastern regions, are in reality directed against the Democratic and Revolutionary Movement. They negatively impact the populations in their daily life and their income-generating activities. The government is using the lack of security situation as a pretext to curb the democratic freedoms (bans on demonstrations by the trade union and democratic organizations, threats against freedom of the press, assassinations attempts against investigative journalists, kidnapping and arbitrary detention of activists, etc.).

But this repression did not bring about the effect expected by the reactionary bourgeoisie, the sowing of fear and resignation among the popular masses.

The fighting spirit is flaring up and developing within the social protest movements that are rising in all the economic and social sectors throughout the national territory. An example of this is the unitary general strike launched by the gigantic March 7 demonstrations. The latter were followed by the general strike of March 16 to 20, 2020, which was widely attended despite the government's measures of pressure and intimidation against the workers. Among these pressures were the containment measures aiming at preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The trade unions decided to carry out the general strike but canceled the demonstration that had been set for March 17. The government obviously used the pandemic as a form of blackmail to stop the strike movement.

The March 7 demonstrations held throughout the country had already been very successful. Hundreds of thousands of protesters had stormed the streets in all of the country's major cities and even in the small localities. In the capital, Ouagadougou, and in Bobo-Dioulasso, the second largest city, the parades of demonstrators stretched over several kilometers. The trade unions have shown their ability for dis-

ciplined mobilization and organization. The maneuvers to divide the workers intended to pit the public servants against the private sector workers have failed miserably. The reason is that there were, among the demonstrators, hundreds of thousands of workers in the sectors of telecommunications, banks and financial institutions, the decentralized financial systems, commerce, industry, textiles, transportation, etc. The populations also expressed their support for these mobilizations. The various trade unions united around a platform of demands structured around five points:

- the end of measures that reduce purchasing power, and the adoption of measures of improvement to cope with the rising cost of living;
- the end of attacks on democratic and trade union freedoms;
- the end of the looting of the national resources;
- the guarantee of the population's right to security;
- the respect and implementation of the various commitments made by the government regarding workers' trade unions.

These massive mobilizations organized in a context of rampant war of the counter-revolution in our country clearly confirm that the people remain standing and determined to carry on the struggles for their immediate demands and for a revolutionary change in their favor. The COVID-19 pandemic comes into play in a national situation that is troubled, very complex and with contradictory processes.

The coronavirus pandemic, an aggravating element of the social, economic and political crisis

Burkina Faso is the country most affected by the coronavirus in West Africa, with more than 200 people declared positive, 7 dead, and 10 recovered as of March 28,. The government, besides taking measures of closing schools, secondary and university institutions, markets, bars and restaurants, has announced confinement rules. It has decreed a curfew for the whole country from 7 PM to 5 AM, the state of health alert, and the quarantine of Ouagadougou (the capital), which has the majority of the infected people, and seven other cities. These measures adopted to curb the spread of the pandemic are quickly reaching their limits. The public health system is in an advanced state of disrepair, and for a long time now it has not been able to provide primary care to the population. The Structural Adjustment Plan imposed in the early 1990s on the African neo-colonies by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund led the State to dis-

engage from the Health and Education sectors. In the case of Burkina Faso, these budgetary restrictions have brought the health facilities to their knees; they are under-equipped and lack trained personnel. The human and animal health workers' union has constantly waged multifaceted struggles (strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations) to demand from the government better working conditions, the provision of equipment and medicines to hospitals and health care centers, and the reevaluation and improvement of the status of the caregiver staff. From May 21 to 25, 2019, this well-established trade union observed a widely followed strike with a participation rate of 99% throughout the national territory and of 100% in certain localities. The strike was followed by the implementation of the watchword to boycott the on-duty and on-call periods from Saturday May 25, 2019 to June 3, 2019.

To deal with Covid-19, Ouagadougou has only one operational center to take care of the infected patients. The health care services that were already overwhelmed lack beds in resuscitation, respirators and protective equipment for the health workers, who are exhausted by the work overload.

The pandemic is taking place in a context where the neocolonial system, through the plundering of the agricultural and mineral resources of the country by the imperialist monopolies and their allies of the reactionary bourgeoisie, causes the development of misery, the destruction of the environment, especially in the mining areas with the poisoning of the groundwater with toxic products such as mercury. Today, in many rural areas, our people have no access to drinking water. These objective conditions limit considerably the ability to respond that the country's health structures require to curb the Covid-19 pandemic.

When applying the curfew, certain members of the defense and security forces use violence and torture on the offenders. These methods have been denounced by magistrates and by the Burkinabe Movement for Human and Peoples' Rights (MBDHP) in the following terms:

"It is pertinent for the MBDHP to condemn the acts of torture and other inhuman and degrading measures inflicted by certain elements of the defense and security forces (FDS) on those apprehended during curfew hours. These acts are unacceptable in a state that is governed by the rule of law, and all the more so since the Public Health Code provides for adequate repression in the event of non-compliance with a health measure".

Faced with Covid-19, the democratic and revolutionary organizations, while advocating the respect for measures aimed at preventing the spread of the pandemic, question the Government on certain immediate decisions to be implemented on the health, economic and social levels. The Trade Union Action Unity (UAS) which brings together the six trade union federations in the country (including the General Confederation of Labor of Burkina), and the independent trade unions expressed the concerns of the workers and of the populations: "We call on the government to:

- strengthen the capacities of frontline combat agents and provide them with the necessary equipment;
- facilitate the access to free screening for the virus and provide effective care to the infected persons;
- develop and strengthen public awareness;
- support all public and private health structures by installing hand-washing devices and by using hydro-alcoholic gel;
- take the necessary measures to control the sale prices of articles and products necessary to prevent the COVID 19 and of products of broad consumption to put an end to speculation and overpricing.

We invite the government to consider medium and long-term measures such as:

- the suspension of certain taxes, water and electricity bills and rents to help the most vulnerable sectors of society, etc.
- the postponement of the deadlines for reimbursement of bank loans for the affected population;
- the reduction of prices of basic necessities;
- the public responsibility for primary health care;
- the increase of the capacity of health facilities to attend people.

The UAS particularly requests the workers to:

- respect the measures to prevent the disease;
- commit everyone to break the chain of spread of the disease.

This coronavirus health crisis is an aggravating element of the many-sided crisis of the imperialist system. It exposes the bankruptcy of the neoliberal policies of the imperialist powers and the financial agencies in their pay, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, that have always imposed the dismantling of public services and privatization in the health sec-

tor. Today people realize with dismay the lack of resources in the hospitals to deal with the pandemic, to the point where healthcare workers in the developed capitalist countries such as France, Italy and Spain lack protective equipment such as masks and gloves. And in our backward agricultural neocolonial country, the situation is even more dramatic.

At the same time, the sales figures of the monopolies are mounting, the national resources are being sold off to mining companies that are exempt from paying taxes, the reactionary bourgeoisie is getting richer through the misappropriation of public funds and economic crimes that go unpunished.

In this chaotic situation, our party calls on the working class, the people in its various components, not to give in to panic, to comply with the preventive measures in order to stem the pandemic. It calls for developing popular solidarity with those infected, with the vulnerable sectors of society, notably with the internally displaced populations due to terrorist attacks, and to support the urgent demands expressed by the Trade Union Action Unity.

To continue the popular struggles for democratic and social rights, notably the Right to Public Health.

To work to develop the unity of the fighting forces, which is the only condition for greater victories.

To unite around the PCRV to carry out the National Democratic and Popular Revolution by the general armed insurrection to drive out French imperialism and its local allies, to constitute a Provisional Revolutionary Government, to convene a Constituent Assembly and to establish a Modern Democratic Republic in order to implement its minimum program of transition to scientific socialism.

Central Committee of the
Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta

March 2020

Dominican Republic

Communist Party of Labor (PCT)

The fight against bureaucratic methods: An integral part of the ideological struggle. *Its specific manifestations.*

"This evil can be overcome only by strenuous and persistent effort over a long period of years.... It will undoubtedly produce good results, even if not as quickly as is expected by those who tend to reduce the 'combating of red tape' to a mere phrase... instead of working hard to take definite steps."

(Lenin, V. I., "Instructions of the Council of Labor and Defense to the Local Soviet Bodies," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 389-390).

I

Bureaucracy is a bourgeois creation, it is the synthesis of the conceptions that the exploiting classes have of the question of the direction, the leadership, on the role of the leaders and the underestimation of the masses in history. Liberalism is its twin brother; where an abysmal style of bureaucratic leadership is manifested and tolerated, conditions are in place for liberalism to flourish.

These deviations are the result of the enormous bourgeois ideological pressure suffered by the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party in the struggle for its construction, the seizure of power and socialism. Bureaucracy as an ideological deviation and political practice is a particularly damaging and dangerous enemy.

Bureaucracy obstructs the emergence of revolutionary initiatives, it promotes the lack of political involvement of the party and fosters the cult of formalism (which is not party formality and discipline), thus preventing the action of the party from taking place at the right place and time.

Thus it is clear that the manifestations of bureaucratism, contrary to what one might commonly believe, have a specific expression that goes beyond the ostentation of hierarchies outside of revolutionary simplicity. Bureaucratic methods transcend that formality and in the sense that we are especially interested in discussing it is that referring to political practice.

The correct application of the rights and duties of the communist militant closes the way to the bureaucratic spirit. As all problems with ideological roots, the correction of bureaucratic deviations in methods of work involves a question that is not only theoretical, but also essentially practical: work, supervision, personal fulfillment of tasks, and the validity of the norms that give substance and form to the party.

In the Communist Party of Labor we have accumulated some experience fighting against bureaucratism. That is why we are aware of the need to gain theoretical clarity about the causes and implications of this deviation while taking political and organizational measures in order to correct it.

This problem was already dealt with in the Second National Conference of Cadres of our party and a resolution was adopted in this regard in January 1984; also in the party school we run a special course on Liberalism and Bureaucracy.

Naturally, the magnitude and expression of the problems derived from bureaucratic methods differ with respect to that situation and the current one, since they correspond to different periods of the development of the party; but deep down their character and essence are the same as bourgeois ideological deviation.

II

All the ideological deviations contrary to the Marxist-Leninist nature and the aims of the party become serious obstacles to its advance both in party construction and in the development of the revolutionary process.

However, experience allows us to affirm that, once a policy for party intervention in a revolutionary spirit regarding a situation has been defined, of all the deviations that threaten such a party, the bureaucratic methods of work are the ones that most frequently and clearly are expressed in politics. While there are manifestations foreign to Marxism-Leninism and the revolutionary spirit that prevail at the subjective level (attitudes and conceptions), this does not with bureaucratism, whose imprint we can immediately see in the sphere of politics, which obviously is expressed at an objective level.

This is particularly appropriate to highlight, judging by the period our party is experiencing and the demands of the ongoing process.

Conservatism, the lack of initiative and the routine that preys upon many of our cadres and organizations eliminates the potential and scope of a policy as bold and clear as the one we have been working

on in the face of the national situation. The bureaucratic methods of leadership and work form the best nurturer for these deficiencies to nest and gain strength.

Here it may be useful to mention some examples that illustrate the weaknesses of our daily lives as demonstrations of what should not be:

A committee of cadres or a regional committee that is only concerned for itself, meetings come and go without their intervening with their own and concrete initiatives even in the specific territory where they exercise their jurisdiction; when in a zone or region the ones responsible cannot find a way for the political campaign that we have initiated can start or be reproduced there; when a circular letter sleeps “the sleep of the just” in the hands of a member of the Central Committee, because the latter is patiently waiting for the next meeting of the liaison body, or also patiently waiting for one of its leaders to take it up; when the telephone replaces any other manner to guarantee follow-up and supervision; when a comrade or body is continually delegating tasks and responsibilities to others; when a leader does not intervene directly in a concrete manner in all manifestations of the political activity of the front, region or organization under his responsibility; when we do not explore the possibility of a radio program in a town; when we are not worried because the circle of our political relations (who are part of the periphery of the party) is the same as three, five or ten years ago; when our dear *Lucha* (newspaper of the PCT – *translator’s note*) remains for days in the hands of a cadre because his other comrades or the member he is guiding “have not come looking for him”; each one of these cases clearly illustrates the presence of methods of work marked by the bureaucratic spirit, which are incompatible with politically energizing an organization, and we have a lot of that in the party, although fortunately this is not what sets the general rhythm of the organization.

Supervision cannot degenerate into a routine act and formalism; it is a matter of high revolutionary principle to guarantee the functioning of the organization and the full compliance with its guidelines, as well as for the correct assimilation of experiences. From this it follows that supervision cannot be carried out in a general way, only at the level of the organizational body, it is necessary to assess the individual compliance of each cadre and each member. Thus conceived, supervision constitutes a tool that prevents the exercise of bureaucratic methods of work and leadership.

III

We are a successful organization, we have maintained ourselves on firm, clear positions and in tune with the national political process; and in the period since the Fourth Congress we have promoted political activities that have kept the party active; but it is obvious judging by the aforementioned weaknesses, that bureaucratic methods are preventing us from having better results in solving "*the contradiction between the enormous possibilities that exist in the country to work on a popular democratic and national liberation project, and the narrowness and lack of energy with which our cadre behave in the fulfillment of their responsibilities,*" (Political Report, Fourth Congress, p.13).

The question of bureaucratic methods of leadership and work, once we have discussed and reflected on it, their solution involves an essentially practical matter, because it involves politics, the way in which we individually address it specifically.

In this regard, the solution of another contradiction emphasized by that Congress regarding the problem of "*...very few hands available for the accumulation and diversity of daily tasks...*" is essential; but it is also valid that the vanguard members, the cadres who have been mobilized to the forefront of the tasks, give of themselves more and more, ignoring the influence of the laggards. Thus we are advancing firmly in the building of cells and committees as fighting units of the party. We cannot march at the pace of the slowest; these must speed up their pace to advance at the pace of the vanguard.



This is correct because with that attitude we will advance in the practical sense in order to display political initiatives, to carry out tasks and advance in changing the bureaucratic methods to the degree that the hostile environment reinforces such manifestations.

Faced with the demands that the party has raised and the national context characterized by open political activism, the fight against bureaucratic methods implies more decisiveness in promoting the political proposal, more propaganda, more politicization of our mass work, more perseverance in the day-to-day political tasks of the party; in short, greater willingness in practice to do concrete things in their area of leadership or membership on the part of each cadre and each member.

We can achieve it. We are a successful organization and we will continue to do things, because by force of events we will grow and win political power.

Ecuador

Pablo Miranda

Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador – PCMLE

The indigenous and popular uprising of October, its lessons and the perspectives for the revolutionary struggle

The country was shaken by the outbreak and development of great struggles of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, of the workers of the city and countryside, the working class and poor peasantry, small merchants, the inhabitants of popular neighborhoods in the cities, the teachers and the progressive intelligentsia, of the great demonstrations of the insurgence of the youth of the indigenous communities, the youth strata of the factory workers, the secondary and university students who went out onto the highways, the streets and squares, indigenous and working women, teachers, students and housewives.

These massive manifestations of the discontent and anger of the workers and peoples were transformed into the indigenous and popular uprising that brought down the attempts of the government and imperialism to apply neoliberal measures.

The popular and indigenous uprising that lasted for 12 days in October 2019 demonstrated that workers and peoples, women and youth are on their feet, fighting for their interests and rights, for freedom and democracy.

The struggle of indigenous peoples and nationalities, led by the CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador); the workers and social organizations led by the FUT (Unitary Workers; Front) and the Popular Front; the workers of the city and countryside who do not belong to any social and union organizations and broad sectors of the youth won a great victory: the repeal of Decree 883, the suspension of labor reforms and the reformulation of the Project of Growth of the Economy.

The victory of the workers and peoples forced a modification of the policies of the IMF and the government, and won their economic, political and ideological demands. But it did not change the nature of the regime, the rules imposed by the IMF are still in force, big national and international capital maintain these demands. The Moreno

government will seek to comply with these demands.

The Draft Law on the Growth of the Economy has already been proposed, excluding the labor reforms, with some reforms from the original draft. It is a project that mainly benefits the large business owners and bankers, exempts them from taxes on profits and eliminates the advance on taxes on profits and the tax on the outflow of foreign currency. This measure was rejected by the majority of Assembly members in order to maintain their prestige, faced with the next elections. Along the same line of subordination to the International Monetary Fund, the IMF sent the Simplicity and Progressive Tax draft that was finally approved by the National Assembly, which responds mainly to the interests of the capitalist class.

Regarding the price of fuel and transportation, the government is seeking to apply a policy of targeting subsidies and fares and the implementation of compensation.

The political events of October 2019 and their results have created a new balance of forces.

During the most important periods of the denunciation of the corruption of the Correa regime, of its high officials and the unmasking of acts of authoritarianism, of the verbiage of the open arms and outstretched hand, the dialogue with all Ecuadorians, a large part of the population was favorable to the presidential administration. Moreno's approval rating was over 70%, he managed to hide the specter of electoral fraud that allowed him to win the election with 51%. Now, after the victory achieved by the popular and indigenous uprising, the credibility of the Moreno government fell to only 14%.

The National Assembly has less than 10% approval. The armed forces and the police have largely been unmasked as repressive forces serving the interests of the government and the most powerful economic groups.

During the days of the popular struggle, the big media, television and press showed an extraordinary partiality towards the theses and proposals of the government and the bourgeoisie; these circumstances were seen by the workers and have somewhat diminished the credibility of these media.

The capitalist class, the bourgeois political parties, the Social Christian Party, CREO (Creating Opportunities), SUMA (Society United for More Action) and Alianza País, which stood firmly on the side of the neoliberal measures, considering them sacred and blessing them, were unmasked, in part, as enemies of the people.

The diversionist policies that were promoted with the so-called white marches that defended "peace and tranquility, the sacred principle of private property" failed; they did not fulfill their purpose of delegitimizing the indigenous and popular uprising, they were reduced to an important and solitary march in Guayaquil, to small showings in other cities.

Nebot, who tried to promote his presidential campaign in the midst of the people's struggle, saw his political project crumble, as he himself recognize; his racist shouts lost him a part of the strength he had accumulated. The Social Christian party from within the Guayaquil Mayor's Office was seen to be racist.

The pro-Correa forces suffered a new setback. After the unmasking of the feast of public money, the corruption, prosecution and imprisonment of the former vice-president, of several former ministers and high officials, he tried to establish himself as the popular opposition to the Moreno regime. He denounced the neoliberal policies and organized some marches and demonstrations, a five-day peasant strike that was unsuccessful. People saw that the pro-Correa forces did not go out into the street; they did not fight for their authoritarian leader. In the local elections of March 2019, the pro-Correa forces supported the party of a corrupt man who is facing prison and won 11% of the vote and two out of the 23 prefectures.

In the popular and indigenous uprising the pro-Correa forces opted for a conspiracy, they infiltrated the indigenous movement, the inhabitants of the popular neighborhoods; they carried out acts of provocation, used the assets and resources of the prefectures to finance their forces, which they kept in action through daily payoffs to participate. They took up positions against the indigenous nationalities and peoples, the FUT and the Popular Front, the denunciation of the repression that they advocated when they were in power, the provocations and acts of vandalism, as well as the denunciations by the government contributed to their isolation. After the uprising they were isolated, they denounced what they called the betrayal of the CONAIE and they claimed that they were being politically persecuted.

The pro-Correa forces are weakened but not eliminated. The assessment that he might win the next elections is maliciously promoted by the government and the bourgeois political parties that raise the ghost; they are completely unfounded concerns but worries of the middle strata and considerable sectors of the workers.

In reality, the pro-Correa forces are a political force, they have a firm base; but they are losers. In the last elections they only won 11% down from the 54% that they obtained in the 2017 legislative elections. They were a defeated political alternative in the popular and indigenous uprising. They are not a big political force, they do not have the potential they claim, but they should not be underestimated since their social base comes from sectors of the impoverished laboring classes of the city and the countryside.

In the popular camp important qualitative changes took place that are influencing the social and political forces, the consciousness of the working masses and youth, of the whole of society.

The indigenous movement and particularly the CONAIE are better situated than in the immediate past, they are recognized for their organization, consistency and courage in the struggle, for the correctness of their proposals, for the seriousness of their main spokespersons and leaders.

The accumulated strength of the indigenous movement forms an important force in the workers' and popular movement, in the political parties and organizations of the left.

Pachakutik, a party that is an important part of the indigenous movement, reaffirms its validity in the territories where it has been showing strength and significance and it is growing in the minds of the workers and peoples throughout the country.

The working class, above all, its sectors organized in the class federations that are part of the FUT waged an important struggle; they were organizers and protagonists of the national strike that took place on October 9, within the framework of the popular and indigenous uprising. The demands proposed, mainly the opposition to labor flexibility, were taken up by the working class as a whole, including by the rank-and-file of the yellow union federations made up of the pro-Correa forces and sponsored by Moreno.

The victory of the workers was materialized in the suspension of the original Draft Law on the Growth of the Economy during the popular and indigenous uprising and later, in the withdrawal of the parts of the labor reform from the new draft of the same Law after the end of the people's struggle.

The FUT reaffirmed its position as the main organization of the workers among its own rank-and-file and beyond, to a good part of the working class centered in other plants, to considerable sectors of the unorganized workers who make up the majority.

The UGTE (General Union of the Workers of Ecuador) took a decisive part in the call, organization and development of the national strike. To a great extent, it developed the debate in the union assemblies, promoted the nature, ideological and political tasks and the responsibilities of the working class towards the other laboring classes and society. As a result of its participation and the end of the popular and indigenous uprising, the UGTE can show the support of its rank-and-file and the sympathy of other sectors of the working class; it can be proud of the possibilities for its reaffirmation and development, it must take advantage of the situation in order to advance.

The union and social organizations that make up the Popular Front, the UGTE, FEUNASSC (United National Federation of Affiliates to Peasants' Social Security), UNE (National Union of Educators), CUCOMITAE (Unitary Federation of Retail Merchants and Self-Employed Workers of Ecuador), CUBE (Unitary Federation of Neighborhoods of Ecuador), Women for Change, FESE (Federation of Secondary Students of Ecuador), FEUE (Federation of University Students of Ecuador) and UNAPE (National Union of People's Artists of Ecuador) participated with a good part of their rank-and-file in the various days of the popular and indigenous uprising; their leaders were determined and courageous fighters, their members and rank-and-file were fired up and nourished by the lessons of the struggle of the masses, by the development of new and varied forms of struggle, their banners were seen by the fighters in the streets and squares.

The Popular Front, the social and political forces that comprise it, came out strengthened from the struggles of October; they have the space, the conditions and responsibilities to situate themselves in the new scenarios and to advance in the consolidation of their organization, to develop new struggles and, above all, to insist on the obligation to educate the rank-and-file politically, to build revolutionary consciousness in the minds, organization and action of the masses.

The Popular Unity reaffirmed during the events its nature as a party of the revolutionary left; its leaders, its rank-and-file, affiliates and sympathizers were actively integrated into the direct political response to the anti-popular and anti-national policies of the Moreno government. They denounced them in a timely manner and clarified their neoliberal nature, the intention to shift the weight of the crisis on the shoulders of the workers and peoples.

The members of Popular Unity were present within the social organizations; they took part in the debate and making of decisions and

they joined the struggle in the neighborhoods, the unions and the organizations of teachers, peasants and students.

The Popular Unity said “we are present,” its banners flew in the streets and squares of the country. On October 2, in the street demonstration that began the struggles that developed into the popular and indigenous uprising, the Popular Unity raised the slogan "**Neither Moreno Nor Correa; Only the People Can Save the People**", which was chanted by thousands of protesters during the days of the popular struggle.

The Popular Unity confirmed its character as a left party that represents and fights for the interests and rights of the working masses and youth. It has put forth new challenges and the possibility to face them in order to advance steadily in their organization and relevance in the minds of the people.

Other organizations and movements of the revolutionary left, the Revolutionary Movement of Workers (MRT), the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), the José Carlos Mariátegui Movement, the Guevarista Liberation Movement, Revolt and others were directly involved in the fight; they fought side by side with the indigenous people, the workers and youth; they disseminated their proposals and slogans. A good part of the rank-and-file of the Socialist Party were also involved, despite the silence of its leadership. In the course of the struggle, unity in action was concretized. It was possible to fight together against the common enemy, neoliberalism and the Moreno government. These circumstances pose certain possibilities for advancing in the unitary process of the revolutionary left.

The popular struggle became the crucible and the test by which these formations of the revolutionary left were made visible and strengthened.

An important result of the development of the popular and indigenous uprising is the considerable level of unity in action, among the parties and organizations of the revolutionary left, which was forged in the midst of the struggle. The common objectives, the justness of the cause, the strength and decisiveness of the indigenous movement and, of course, the nature of the forces of the revolutionary left allowed them to put aside, on a secondary level, the ideological and political differences and place unity in the center of the struggle.

These events pose for the present, the immediate future and the medium term the possibility of finding meeting points for the discussion of the projects and policies among all the left revolutionaries, to

advance to agreements of a programmatic nature in the medium and long term.

A new scenario arises for the party of the proletariat, the certainty that it is possible to speak, to discuss projects, that progress can be made in building the unity of the revolutionary forces.

We propose to open the debate on the basis of equality, to put aside prejudices, to get to know each other and to set goals and paths. We maintain, as in the past, that nobody has the right to impose their project or their points of view, as well as that no organization has the power to veto the agreements. We are in favor of open, frank and democratic discussion of majority agreements. We reject the policy of consensus, which is nothing other than the right to veto.

The party of the proletariat was involved in a direct and responsible manner, in the orientation and propaganda, in the debate among the social organizations and groups to propose and guide the resistance and the struggle against the neoliberal policies implemented by the government of Moreno. We committed ourselves to work in the provincial and national assemblies and the congresses of the workers and social organizations; we were present at the Conventions of the FUT and we encouraged unity and the call for the national strike.

For months the Party and its forces have been involved in spreading and discussing the call for the national strike, the work of organizing it among the rank-and-file of the social and union organizations, in the places where we have an impact and responsibilities. We un-



derstood that the decision and the call were important but that they had to be taken up by the masses.

The Party took a decisive part, its members and sympathizers were in the frontlines of the battle, in the streets and squares, on the roads and highways. They were able to involve a good part of the party's social base, important sectors of the masses of workers, youth and women.

The participation of the membership in the popular struggles of October provided great lessons: it reaffirmed the proletarian conceptions of the role of the masses in history, of the role of unity in the struggle, in the objectives and proposals, in the present and the future, in the struggle as the way to defend and win the interests and rights of the masses. It allowed the forging and steeling of the revolutionary convictions; it broadened the view of the communists of the role and nature of the other revolutionary political organizations.

The assessment that is being carried out regarding what the popular indigenous uprising was and meant, of the new scenarios and spaces that resulted from the victory achieved by the struggle, shows that the vast majority of the members were directly involved in the fighting, that this participation affirmed them in the positive evaluation of the Party and its policies as an expression of the most advanced revolutionary thought, as the most determined and ready for the fight.

In these battles, we made significant progress in the process of the accumulation of revolutionary forces.

The bourgeoisie is trying to delegitimize the popular struggle

The ruling classes and the political parties of the bourgeoisie are aware of these new circumstances, above all, of the potential of the popular forces and the revolutionary left, and they are unleashing a big ideological and political offensive; they are unleashing a real witch hunt, they are criminalizing social fighters and the leaders of the indigenous people and of the workers.

Now, after the defeat inflicted by the indigenous and popular uprising, they are claiming that the country has been devastated by vandalism and the excesses of the protesters, that they have lost hundreds of millions of dollars and that finally, "we are all losers", that the struggle and its outcome did not lead to winners or losers.

They talked of the existence of an international plot, the participation of foreigners, of Colombian guerrillas and pro-Maduro activ-

ists, of the planning and carrying out of terrorist acts, of the establishment of the urban guerrilla, all in order to discredit the struggle.

The entire bourgeoisie is telling these lies, calling the masses who took part in the struggle irrational, contingents led in an authoritarian manner by leaders whom they demonize as enemies of democracy and freedom. They are announcing and preparing anti-insurgent policies and actions, as well as the improvement of the information and intelligence services, whose actors are the Armed Forces and the Police.

The work of the big media in the development of this ideological and political attack is intense and demands a timely and sustained response from the revolutionary forces and, especially, from the party of the proletariat.

They boast of their democratic "disposition" and that they recognize the right of workers and peoples to protest, to make demands; but they condemn what they call acts of vandalism and terrorism. They call the popular and indigenous uprising just, they recognize that they were wrong in their analysis and proposals, but they denigrate the social fighters, they call them violent, that they are attacking peace and private property. They recognize the right of the indigenous people to oppose the cultural discrimination and segregation of which they are victims and at the same time they accuse them of being revanchists, of opposing progress. They declare themselves to be friends and supporters of the peasants, of the rural workers whom they identify as the forgotten ones, those ignored by all the governments and they claim that the decrees and measures are aimed at their salvation. They say that the regime is the standard bearer for dialogue, that it has its arms outstretched and its hands open to talk and build consensus for the good of the country, of the need to make sacrifices now in order to enjoy tomorrow and at the same time they call for repression, the use of tear gas, horses and motorized vehicles to defend the order threatened by the people's struggle.

These tales of the government and the reactionary political parties, of the chambers of commerce, of most of the big media, of the heads of the Catholic Church lie about the events that occurred in the indigenous and popular uprising in October; they distort them. For the tens of thousands of people who took a direct part in the struggles, in the city and the countryside, in the streets and squares, things are clear, but this is not the same for the vast majority of the population who are the object of this ideological manipulation.

**Facts are stubborn things; they show
the reasons for the social struggle**

The proletarian revolutionaries, the men and women who make up the workers' and popular movement, the social actors of the indigenous movement must take up the responsibility of denouncing these fallacies and make clear again and again the nature of the events and their results.

We, the indigenous people and the workers of the city and countryside, are not criminals, vandals, much less terrorists or saboteurs; we are the labor force that sustains the life and development of society.

These were hard days for the workers in industry, in the mines and construction who create the wealth of the country that allows for the satisfaction of the vital needs of the Ecuadorians, even though for now, much of that wealth is expropriated by the employers. It is the labor of millions of peasants that allows us to meet the daily needs of the Ecuadorians, food; it is the work of agricultural wage earners that makes possible the export of agricultural products and livestock, which provides foreign exchange for the purchase of products that need to be imported. It is the daily work of the self-employed workers that allows for much of the production and exchange of useful goods. The activity of the teachers, health-care workers and public servants provides the daily dynamic of society.

The acts of vandalism that took place during the uprising, which certainly took place, were the work of the provocateurs of the pro-Correa forces and the repressive forces that were trying to place the blame on the popular fighters.

It is recognized by all that the 11 dead, the 1,340 wounded and the 1,152 arrested were from the ranks of the social fighters, who were victims of the brutal repression ordered by the government. The Mission of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights itself reaffirmed this. That means that the social mobilizations and the action of the popular fighters were defensive, responding to the bullets and tear gas with shouts, sticks and stones.

On the other hand, the indigenous and popular uprising in October set goals and achieved them; the government and the oligarchy set goals for themselves and were unable to achieve them. There were massive battles that achieved a great victory.

The clearly established truth is that Ecuadorians do not have to pay more for fuel and transportation, that the hourly contract and la-

bor flexibility did not pass, that the wages of the workers were not lowered. The reality is that we millions of Ecuadorians were able to see on television how the President surrendered to the just demands of the indigenous and popular movement. The workers and peoples won a momentous victory.

It is clear that the great loser was the government and the whole of the ruling classes that were forced to back down from their attempts to free up fuel prices.

The democratic verbiage with which they supposedly recognize the people's right to make demands and protest aims at masking the authoritarian, arrogant and repressive nature of the regime; it clashes with the facts, with the measures to strengthen the military capacity to silence the social protest.

Unity was forged and developed in combat

The indigenous and popular uprising was a great example of the unity of the workers and peoples, of the working women and youth, the left-wing political parties and organizations. The political unity was forged in the discussion among the indigenous communities of the CONAIE, among the rank-and-file workers in the unions, in the provincial and national federations, in the FUT, in the trade union and social organizations that make up the Popular Front, in the debate among the social and political activists and collectives that defend nature and the environment. This political unity was concretized in a common Platform, in specific targets, in the demand that the government repeal the neoliberal measures and the labor flexibility. Unity was expressed in the struggle, in the streets and squares, in the territories and on the highways, in the daily assemblies that analyzed the progress of the fight.

These important expressions of the unity of the working masses, the peoples and the youth form the basis to advance more decisively in the building of unity for the seizure of power, for the building of socialism.

Our responsibilities demand that we continue developing, under current conditions, the unity of the workers, peoples and youth in order to confront and overcome the arrogance of the employers, for the defense of our rights, for the winning of the demands of the masses.

Only the unity of the workers within their trade union and social organization will allow us to clarify the reasons for the fight, to identify our true friends and determine our enemies, and fight decisively

against their policies and for the interests of the masses. A union unified around the immediate and medium-term aims of its members will be able to develop a consistent leadership that will have the courage to achieve its goals. The unity forged in each of the social and union organizations is the stage for the politicization of the masses, to forge and affirm the political objectives of the seizure of popular power.

It is necessary to move from unity in one union and one commune to unity among the unions, to the forging of fraternal ties among the workers of one Federation, one province, one sector of production. We must advance in the formation of unitary structures with the other sectors of the working class and peasantry, the youth and teachers.

The achievements made in the formation of the Collective of Social Organizations and in the Parliament of the Peoples should serve as a basis to advance in forging the ideological and political unity of the workers with the indigenous movement, social organizations and activists who defend nature and the environment. We must work so that the activists of the indigenous and popular uprising work in a united way to take up all the tasks of social and political life.

The Party must learn from the experiences achieved in the forging of the revolutionary movement of the masses, the unitary organizations that are being built; it must work to consolidate and develop them; it must use it as a basis to broaden the unity to other social sectors.

The Popular Front as an expression of coordination and action of the class-struggle union organizations, of the poor peasantry, the small merchants, the poor neighborhood residents, the secondary and university students, the women must be taken seriously by the provincial committees, by the national leadership, by the members and leaders of the party.

The FUT is an organization in which various union federations and different political positions converge; it is an organization that has won an important place within the working class and people. The responsibilities taken up by the FUT must be completely fulfilled. We must actively participate in the debate, in the making of decisions and be consistent in the application of these decisions.

The political situation in the country, the important development of the organization and struggle of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, the presence and activity of the CONAIE reaffirm the proposals of the Political Line regarding the role of the indigenous movement in the Ecuadorian revolution; they demand a sustained and

long-term work for building the unity of the workers and peoples and, especially, with the indigenous peoples and nationalities.

The multicultural nature of the country exists within the workers' and popular movement; in it workers, men and women, youth and adults, mestizos, indigenous and blacks come together, the variously colored nature of the workers and the peoples. The building of a fraternal and revolutionary interculturality among the social historical actors of the Ecuadorian revolution is a responsibility shared by all of them. The banners of social and national liberation, the red flag of the workers, the wipala of the indigenous movement, the national tricolor must fly in all the popular struggles, in all the proposals and programs.

The political and organizational ties that are being developed within the popular movement show the party's decision to work in that direction and make clear the readiness and determination of other political and social forces to come together in actions and organizations to strengthen the popular bloc, to lead it to the seizure of popular power.

Marxism-Leninism, the general guidelines of the PCMLE, the concrete conjunctural proposals serve as a guide for the work of the proletarian revolutionaries; work must be done to bring the revolutionary theory, the programmatic proposals of the revolution and socialism to the broad masses.

The unity of the leftists

The task of building the United Revolutionary Front requires a unitary work of the Party within the working class, the other laboring classes and the indigenous movement; it also demands a unitary policy towards the other parties and political organizations of the revolutionary left.

The overthrow of the power of imperialism and the big bourgeoisie, the establishment of popular power and the building of the society of the workers are objectives of the working class and peoples, they require the struggle of the workers of the city and the countryside, of the youth, they demand the building, in the course of the struggle, of the unity of the motive forces of the revolution, of the social and political actors.

The PCMLE has been taking up its responsibility in organizing the revolution, in the process of accumulating forces, in the multiple activities that are taking place in the confrontation of the workers and youth with the employers, the bourgeois state and the governments in office.

On this path, other parties and political organizations of the revolutionary left are converging with whom we agree in the streets, in the strike movement, in the joint confrontation with the policies of the bourgeoisie; they also involve the ecologists and environmentalists, the supporters of the Yasuni [a large national park in the Amazon region of Ecuador – *translator's note*], the fighters for human rights, the activists of the movement of the women, of the LGBTI, the leftist intellectuals and non-party fighters. With all of them we must build unity against the establishment, against imperialism and the government in office.

Each organization has its own programmatic proposals, political lines and strategic objectives; they have a leadership and membership that fights for those purposes. We all consider ourselves revolutionaries, we call ourselves anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist fighters; we carry out actions in the workers' and youth movement.

In the daily fight against the policies of imperialism and the bourgeoisie, basically, there are common points, reasons to unite our energy and forces.

On the basis of these facts, the PCMLE proposes to open the debate, on the basis of equality, with all the political parties and organizations of the left, to find the points of union, to point out differences but not to raise them as barriers to hinder unity, to seek concrete agreements, to walk and fight together.

The PCMLE does not have attitudes of hegemony. It does not try to impose its lines on anyone, but it does not renounce its obligation to circulate them and put them forward among the masses, to discuss them with other revolutionaries.

The PCMLE proclaims its willingness to seek agreements, under all circumstances and in all places, to join forces to win, through struggle, the demands of the masses, to work persistently for commitments of programmatic content that go beyond unity in the struggle, that propose political objectives.

Ecuador, March 2020

India

Revolutionary Democracy

Condition of Indian Labouring Masses

Part One – The Rural Labouring People

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

The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) set up by Government of India, periodically produces reports on various aspects of Indian economy and society. Its methods and conclusions have always been subject to much debate, but nevertheless it provides the most credible source of information as it is based on door to door survey of actual people and not on any data generated by government departments. In recent years the Modi government has been at great pains to either block the publication of NSSO reports or discredit them altogether, simply because it has been pointing to several negative trends in the performance of the economy. The latest in this is the tussle over the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) annual report¹, a survey which had concluded in June 2018, but whose results were not allowed to be made public till May 2019 after many of the conclusions had been leaked to the press. It was published well after most of the polling for the 2019 General Elections had been completed and could not impact voter mood. So what was in it that was so damaging to the Modi Government? What is being talked about is the significant and unprecedented increase in unemployment especially among the educated youth and the dangerous decline in female participation in labour force during the last five years (after 2012 when the previous survey had been conducted). These findings were corroborated by independent survey compiled by Azim Premji University.² This is a damning verdict on the

¹ Periodic Labour Force Survey, Annual Report, (July 2017 to June 2018), New Delhi, May 2019

² State of Working India, 2019. Azim Premji University, Bengaluru 2019. This report is even more damning as it traces the present downturn in employment to the twin projects of Modi of demonetisation and GST. “Five million men lost their jobs between 2016 and 2018, the beginning

economic performance of the Modi government which came to power with the claim that it will restore the economy and eliminate unemployment. It marks the failure of its high profile campaign to attract foreign direct investment ('Make in India'), hare brained schemes like withdrawal of high value currency notes ('demonetisation) ostensibly to eradicate 'black money', and the poorly conceptualised and disastrously implemented policy of unification of all indirect taxes under one central tax called Goods and Services Tax (GST). The Modi government had imagined that by opening land market in rural and forest areas it will facilitate some form of 'primitive accumulation' leading to a spurt in Industrial production and employment generation. This met with stiff resistance of the peasants and adivasis forcing the government to withdraw the bill which sought to nullify the legal protection granted under previous government. Then it mounted an attack on the country's principal employment sector – the unorganised sector by the ill-advised 'demonetisation', which drained the vast informal economy of its life blood – cash. The consequent slowing down of the economy meant forced decline of employment for nearly a year in all sectors and a resultant decline in demand in the market. As the economy slowly recovered from this onslaught another blow was stuck in the name of unifying the national market with a single indirect tax. It imposed a complex reporting system on all employers, shopkeepers and even freelance workers ('service providers'). This virtually brought the economy again to a standstill.

In the light of these misadventures of the Modi government it should not be a matter of surprise that unemployment levels have gone up substantially. However, the NSSO report also points a long term trend not confined to the Modi government and extends to the current neo-liberal policy regime inaugurated in the early 1990s by the then Congress government. This is the effect of the policy of jobless growth that has characterised the neo liberal growth over the last few decades.

The report also highlights various other aspects of Indian labour force which have not received enough attention in the press or academia so far. To these we will turn now. In this study we shall focus on the status of Rural Labouring Population and we hope to follow it with a similar study of the Urban Labouring Population in the coming issues.

of the decline in jobs coinciding with demonetisation in November 2016” (p.21). This report mainly focuses on urban employment issues.

Who are the labouring people?

Households: The report estimates a total population of about 1074 million people living in about 257 million households giving an average of over 4 persons per household. 71 % of them live in rural areas indicating only about 30% urbanisation. This preponderantly rural character of the Indian labour force should be kept in mind while reading rest of the data, which gives rural and urban figures separately.

Demographic Profile Estimates in (000)								
Rural			Urban			All		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
388,882	370,273	759,277	160,213	154,569	314,826	549,095	524,842	1,074,103
		70.7%			29.3%			

PLFS Statement 1: Estimated numbers of households, persons, average household size and sex ratio during 2017-18

PLFS Statement 2: Average household size (0.0) and sex ratio

These 257 million households are divided into three broad categories of 'self-employed', salaried or regular wage employment and thirdly casual labour. This is obviously not a class category in the sense that the 'self employed' will include the small peasants, landlords and rural capitalist farmers as well as petty shopkeepers, fruit sellers, etc of the towns and also capitalists of various sizes. However, given the fact that the presence of capitalists in these samples is likely to be small, we can presume that these categories broadly refer to petty producers, blue collared workers/government employees and proletarians respectively. The distribution of the rural households over these broad categories is as follows:

Table 1. Distribution of Rural households by livelihood in %		
	2011-12	2017-18
Self Employed in agriculture	34	38
Self Employed in non-agricultural work	16	14
Total Self Employed	50	52
Salaried / regular wage earning	10	13
Casual Labour in agriculture	21	12
Casual labour in non-agricultural work	13	13
Total Casual Labour	34	25
Others	06	10

(PLFS Statement 3)

This table gives us a snapshot of rural society of India: About 38% of the rural households can be categorised as ‘peasant’ households in that they till their own farms. While another 14% of rural households are self-employed or own their own petty means of production – could be artisans or shop keepers. Thus nearly half the rural population consists of petty producers. The other half is clearly dependent upon wage labour of diverse kinds – some are regular salaried (school teachers, government employees etc) and wage earners. Most others (about 25% of all rural households) depend upon ‘casual wage labour’.

A comparison with the previous NSS survey of 2011-12 shows some important changes. It shows a significant increase in the households dependent upon farming and salaried or regular wage earning. On the other hand, the percentage of households dependent upon agricultural labour has declined steeply from 21% to 12%. Similarly households dependent upon non-agricultural self employment too shows a decline.

This perhaps indicates a decline of wage labour used in agriculture due to increased mechanisation. It may also indicate a decline in non-agricultural production in the rural areas as an aftermath of the demonetisation etc, which has forced people back to agriculture. This is otherwise incongruous with the general expected trend of decline in percentage of the population dependent upon agriculture as an economy heads towards capitalist development.

We shall now turn our attention from ‘households’ to individuals living in the rural areas.

The survey shows persistence of illiteracy in the rural population, especially among women. The literacy rate in the population above the age of seven years (when children should have spent at least two years of schooling): for males – 81% and for females 65%. That is, nearly 20 % of the males and 35% females in the rural areas are illiterate and thus any employment opportunity other than casual manual labour (or subordinate domestic labour) is closed to them. However, it should be admitted that over the last 10-15 years the literacy situation has been steadily improving in the rural areas – in 2004-05 the literacy rate for rural males was 73% and for rural females was a mere 51%. To some extent one may attribute this improvement to the passage of the Right to Education Act in 2007 which led to a concerted effort to bring all children to the school.

A closer look at education levels among the youth who constitute and will constitute the core of the working population in the coming years will be useful.

Table 2. % Distribution of Rural Youth (15-29 years) by educational levels

	Not Literate		Up to Class V		Up to Class VIII		Class IX and above	
	2004-5	2017-18	2004-5	2017-18	2004-5	2017-18	2004-5	2017-18
Male	8	6	27	13	27	29	28	53
Female	38	13	24	16	19	27	19	43

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

While the share of illiterate persons has declined significantly during the intervening decade, the percentage of children completing formal schooling of ten years appears to be substantially on the increase: 53% male and 43% female, doubling during the decade. A part of this improvement may be attributed to efforts of the state subsequent to the passing of the RTE Act in 2007. During the early part of this period the public spending on education as percentage of the GDP grew marginally to 3.1% 2013. This share has subsequently shrunk during the Modi government tenure to 2.7% in 2018-19. However, we should remember that is also the period when education has been increasingly privatised both formally through the increase of private schools and informally through tuition and coaching centres. Thus the cost of schooling has been in the main borne by the labouring people themselves. This table clearly shows the huge investment the Indian working people are making in educating their children, ensuring that they complete their schooling.

Nevertheless, it is a matter of concern that nearly 13 % girls and 7% boys are entering the labour market without being able to read or write and another 16% girls and 13% boys are barely literate. Even more worrying is the fact that of the working population of Indian rural areas (persons above 15 years of age) we find abysmally low education:

Table 3. % Distribution of Rural Population (15+ years) by educational levels 2017-18				
	Illiterate	Up to Class V	Up to Class VIII	Class IX and above
Male	23	18	24	36
Female	42	18	18	23

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

Table 3 shows that a substantial segment of the rural population (41% males and 60% females) is either illiterate or barely literate and the gender gap is very large. This leaves the vast majority of the rural population to fend with its own resources (either petty capital or physical labour) without any skill acquired from education. It has been argued that lack of elementary education not only reduces the possibility of employment in high or moderate income jobs, but also becomes a stumbling block in using legal and constitutional rights or in simple bargaining with employers or potential buyers of products (for petty producers).

It is a pity that the survey does not go into the health status of the population, which along with education is a major factor in determining the quality of labour of the worker or petty producer. Simple techniques are available to judge malnutrition or illness during the preceding six months. We know from other surveys that a large segment of the population (especially female population) is undernourished. An NSSO report for 2011-12³ tells us that substantial segments of rural population in the lower decile classes based on average expenditure (57% in the lowest and 39% in the second lowest decile group) were grossly under nourished. We are told that the percentage of population which is undernourished has been increasing steadily from 2004-5 reaching 20% in the rural areas. The nourishment they got from food was mainly in the form of carbohydrates from cereals. The consumption of protein has been steadily decreasing ever since India entered the era of globalisation in the early 1990s as the prices of gram (*dal*) skyrocketed. Increased consumption of fat has taken the place of protein. An NSSO report on health of the population conducted in 2014, indicates that about 8% of Rural Males and 10% of

³ Nutritional Intake in India, NSSO Report no. 560, 68th Round New Delhi 2014

rural females reported illness during the previous fortnight⁴. A little less than half of them were of chronic nature. The incidence of chronic illness increased substantially in the 40+ age group and was alarmingly high in the case of 60+ age group. The same report also indicates that the poorest strata are facing maximum health hazard: 13% of those in the lowest income group (among the five income groups) in rural areas reported illness during the previous fortnight.

It should be noted that educational and health services level in the region in many ways determined perception of illness and health. Thus Kerala (31%) followed by West Bengal and Tamil Nadu (16%) reported the highest morbidity in rural areas while states like Bihar and Assam reported much less. This is perhaps not because the people of the former states were facing greater health hazards but more because of their health awareness and education.

An increasingly undernourished labouring population susceptible to illness (mostly related to infections resulting from low body resistance, poor sanitation and contaminated drinking water) with little or no education is populating the rural labour force of India. While the educational status has been improving over the last decade or so, the reverse unfortunately is true for nutrition and health. It can be argued that the rural people of India, desperate to get out of the poverty are investing heavily into education even at the cost of their food and health.

Labour Force Participation Rates

Capitalist notions of productive work requires primarily production of exchange values and as such discounts all labour which does not produce immediately saleable goods or services. Thus household work of women, children or old persons is not classed as economic activity at all in the surveys. However production, which may not be sold but consumed over long time (as that of small farmers who eat the grains they grow) and infrastructure building like building one's own house or digging one's own well are also considered economic activity. Often activities like begging, prostitution or robbery are also not counted as economic activity by some perverted logic.

Out of the entire population only a part is engaged or willing to engage in productive labour ('economically active'). Such persons including those who may be currently unemployed but willing to be

⁴ Health in India, NSSO Report no. 564, 71st Round, New Delhi 2016.

employed are counted within the ‘labour force’. Thus children, school and college going youth and aged or sick persons are not likely to engage in productive work on a regular basis. Some others, may be constrained by social conventions to keep out of labour market (caste prejudices). In many ways labour force participation indicates the level of socialisation of labour, especially reproductive labour, which enables men and women to perceive all kinds of work as labour and enter the labour market accordingly. It does not mean that those not included in the labour force are idling away. Education of children is fast becoming one of the pernicious forms of child labour where children are prepared as both consumers in the present and as skilled workers in the future. Often womenfolk are considered outside the labour force just because they are busy attending to reproduction of labour (childbirth, rearing, household tasks etc). Old people too contribute to social work in many ways, but are not categorised as being part of the labour force. With these reservations let us look at the data regarding rural labour force participation. Given these qualifications, we may look into the proportion of the rural population engaged in economic activities as defined by the NSSO.

According to the 2017-18 NSSO PLF survey, 55% of rural male population and 18% of the rural female population are counted in the ‘labour force’. However we need to disaggregate these figures to understand the reality better.

Table 4. Rural Labour force Participation and Working Population Estimates						
	Male % & Persons 000		Female % & Persons 000		All	
Labour Force Participation	54.9%	225,163	18.2%	67,390	37%	292,553
Workers	51.7%	201,052	17.5%	64,798	35%	265,850

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

PLFS Statement 9: Worker Population Ratio (in per cent) according to usual status)

From the details of the data provided in page 192-3 of the report the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. Under normal circumstances we do not expect children under 15 years and elders above 65 to be ‘economically active’ and working. Hence in international calculations for labour force participation only the age group 15-64 is taken into account. However, the

survey data only tells us about labour participation in the age group 15 years and above, which is 76% for males and 25% for females in the rural areas.

2. The report uses two categories to calculate working population: labour force participation (which includes potential workers who are currently unemployed) and Work participation (which includes only those currently employed).

Thus of the rural male population only about 52% is working and among rural women only 35% is working.

3. The prevalence of child labour is indicated by the fact that 0.1% of children in 5-9 age group and 2.2% (male) and 0.5% (female) children in the 10-14 age group are at work. Nearly 25% males and 5% female adolescents and youth in the age group of 15-19 years enter the labour market.
4. About 39% of old men and 7% old women in the age group of 65 and above continue to work to make ends meet. In the context of India, it indicates the lack of any old age social security worth the name, which forces the elderly also to continue to work.
5. It would appear that over the years, participation in labour force has declined. In 2004-5 the rural male participation in labour force was around 85% which has declined to 76% in 2017-18 as mentioned above. Indeed, the participation of women has come down drastically from 50% to just 25% during the same period. A part of the reason for this has been the spread of education which delays the entry of youth over 15 years of age into the labour market. This however is not sufficient to explain the steep decline as in the case of female labour participation.
6. The data provides an inescapable conclusion that the rural 'working population of India is predominantly male. In the age group 25 to 59 years, more than 90% of the men are in the labour force. However, the figure for women in the same age group hovers between 32 and 37%.
7. Conversely 60-70% women in the 25-64 age group are engaged in household and related work like tending cattle, gathering fuel & food, sewing for domestic consumption etc. As mentioned earlier, this is a consequence not only of patriarchal hold over the rural households but also a low degree of socialisation of reproduction of labour. Reproduction of labour requiring not only child birth and rearing, but also cooking, cleaning, gleaning, gathering, grinding, kitchen gardening, sewing, tending to the sick, etc., etc.

continues to be part of household activity to be done by women and girls without wages.

8. A startling revelation by the PLFS report has been regarding the incidence of unemployment, especially youth unemployment. While the overall unemployment rate for rural males is 4.4% for the age group 15 and above, it is substantially high for the 15-29 age group. 7% for 15-19 age, 16% for 20-24 age group and 8% for 25-29 age group. At the beginning of the decade there was much talk about the demographic dividend accruing to India, with the large youth population. It is this segment of the population which is facing severe unemployment.
9. The report also indicates high level of female unemployment – nearly one percent of the female population in the 15+ age group going up to about 3.6% for the 20-24 age group. Thus even as women are appearing in the labour market having contended with patriarchy, they are confronted with little absorption.

A matter of major concern has been a steady decline in the rate of women's participation in labour force over the last few decades. While a large number of countries including Pakistan and Bangladesh have registered a steady increase in women's labour participation, India, China and some south east Asian countries have shown decline. Of course, China and South East Asia had a much higher women's participation to begin with compared to the abysmally low level in India. The increase in Bangladesh has been attributed to the spread of the garment industry which is employing a large number of women in the rural areas too; and secondly to the success of its micro-credit network which has enabled a large number of women to access credit and operate self employed production units. In India the decline has been principally attributed to greater percentage of youth population attending educational institutions instead of taking to work. This however, should have shown in greater employment of women in the 20-25 age group, which is not the case. A second set of reasons given relate to increase in family incomes and the ability of women to opt out of work. While the increase in family income is highly debatable, the Work Participation Ratio for different decile classes (based on average per capita monthly consumption expenditure) in the rural areas shows that higher income groups do not necessarily show any significant increase in female labour participation. Thus the highest decile class in rural areas shows a female WPR of 19.7% against the lowest decile class figure of 16.5 a mere three percentage point dif-

ference (compare this with the comparable figures for rural male WPR – 57.8% and 45.5%, a difference of 12 percentage points).

What actually appears to be happening is that given the decline of employment in the post-liberalisation era as evidenced by both absolute and relative decrease in formal employment, given the overall patriarchal nature of the society, the menfolk are edging the women out of employment and confining them to the sphere of domestic labour, conserving expenses in reproduction of labour. In other words it can mean that in the current phase of capitalist accumulation, there has been a decline of formal labour (earning) opportunities; what remain are being controlled by the men, while women are forced to subsidise this labour by increasing their workload in the unpaid domestic sphere.

The Decile Class figures also indicate an important fact- a higher proportion of the population in the upper decile classes are engaged in work than in the lower decile classes. This indicates that every working person in the lower decile class has to support a larger number of non earning members of the household.

Let us now turn to the kind of employment these workers in the rural areas engage in.

Nature of Employment

The PLFS report uses the term ‘Status of Employment’ for different kinds of employment, namely, owner operated, regular wage/salaried and casual work done for others. Table 5 gives us the relevant information for the rural sector.

	Male		Female		All		Women as % of workforce
	%	Estimated Persons in 000	%	Estimated Persons in 000	%	Estimated Persons in 000	
Self Employed/ Own Account	48	96,505	19	12,312	41	108,817	11
Unpaid (?) Helper	10	19,703	39	25,078	17	44,781	56
Total	58	116,208	58	37,390	58	153,598	24
Regular Wage/ salaried	14	28,148	11	6,804	13	34,952	19
Casual Worker	28	56,697	32	20,606	29	77,303	27
Total	100	201,053	100	64,800	100	265,853	24

Based on Tables 2, 16, 17, 19 of PLFS report.

We noted above that of the rural population about 51.7% men and 17.5% women were ‘working’. Of this entire rural ‘working force’, 58% were engaged in self-employed category, being mostly peasant households and petty artisans or shopkeepers. 13% of the rural labour force had employment which assured them regular wages or salaries. The rest constituting about 29% of the rural working population were casual labourers. Of the self employed labour force nearly 17% were working gratis as subordinate family labour. Of those working gratis, women constituted nearly 56%. This indicates a double problem with regard to women in the rural areas. While the overall share of women in the labour force is a meagre 24%, of these nearly 39% work gratis in family enterprises. Further, even in the self employed sector, of the total workforce engaged in it, only 24% are women. This effectively means that women work with no control over the resources or incomes from labour, even in this sector.

Regular wage/salary earners constitute about 13% of the rural labour force. Of this category, only 19% are women while more than 81% are men. These we may largely presume to be a workforce with some education which enables them to get employment as teachers, government servants of various kinds and even regular wage earners in shops and establishments. In contrast to them nearly 29% of the rural working population engages in unskilled wage labour on a casual basis. This segment too is predominantly male (about 73%). We should expect the poorest women to be in this segment. They constitute 32% of all rural women in the work force, but only 27% of total casual workers.

We may conclude that patriarchal family based petty production constitutes the bulk of productive employment in the rural area of the country, where 70% of the population resides. This sector accounts for nearly 58% of rural employment. While regular salary/wage employment is significant engaging about 13% of total rural labouring population casual wage labour of the property-less and unskilled kind accounts for about 29%. While women’s participation in the rural labour force is small, even out of these few women workers about 39% are not paid for their work.

The nearest to a class profile of the rural population that we get from this report relates to ‘broad occupational divisions’ (Statement 17), which gives us about nine broad divisions. While these should

not be seen as class categories, they can be safely treated as income groups. If one may broadly see these as also income groups then the managerial strata and the professionals would come out as the richest crust of rural society, the middle income group would be constituted by technicians, clerks, service workers and skilled agriculturalists. The low income group would include the skilled crafts-persons (weavers, smiths, potters, etc) working with minimal capital, machine operators (skilled workers) and 'elementary workers' probably unskilled workers. Thus the rural working population would have about 7% high income group, 52% middle income group and 41% low income groups. This roughly maps on the figures for 'self employed' and wage workers in Table 5.

It may be noted that women workers are concentrated in the peasant and unskilled segments and virtually absent in the category of machine operators.

Division	Male	Female	Persons
1. Managerial	5	3	5
2. Professionals	2	2	2
3. Technicians	2	4	3
4. Clerks	1	0	1
5. Service workers	7	4	6
6. Skilled Agriculturalists	40	47	42
7. Skilled Crafts-persons	10	7	9
8. Machine Operators	6	0	4
9. Elementary workers	27	33	28
Total	100	100	100

(Statement 17 of PLFS Report. Division 1: Legislators, senior officials and managers, 2: Professionals, 3: Technicians and associate professionals, 4: Clerks, 5: Service workers and shop & market sales workers, 6: Skilled agricultural and fishery workers, 7: Craft and related trades workers, 8: Plant and machine operators and assemblers, 9: Elementary occupations (unskilled manual workers))

The occupational structure of rural labouring force shows a great degree of diversification and a decreasing reliance on agriculture over the last four decades or so. While agriculture and farming continue to

support bulk of the male (55%) and female (73%) labouring population, its share has come down significantly since 1977-78 as can be seen in the table below.

Table 7. Change in Occupational Profile of Rural Labour Force 1977-8 to 2017-18 (in %)				
	1977-78		2017-18	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture	81%	88%	55	73
Manufacture	6	6	8	8
Construction	2	1	15	5
Trade, Hotel	4	2	9	4
Transport etc	1	0	5	0
Others	5	3	8	10

(PLFS Statement 16)

There is a decline of 26 percentage points over the four decades for men. While 73% labouring women continue to be employed in agriculture, even here we see a decline of about 15 percentage points. The substantial decline of rural male population engaged in agriculture has meant that the share of women in agricultural labour has increased; in 2017-18 thus 43% of total rural labour force engaged in agriculture were women. This implies a feminisation of agricultural labour as men shift away from it to engage in other income/wage earning occupations. We need to see this conjointly with the point made above regarding 39% rural labouring women being engaged in unpaid labour.

It appears that a significant proportion of rural male population has shifted to construction, trade and transport. Women too have used the diversification of employment opportunity in recent years to take up work in media, finance, administrative support, education, health, entertainment etc. Nearly ten percent of rural labouring women have taken up such professions, an increase of 7 percentage points over 1977-78.

Even though agricultural productivity has increased between 1987 and the present, the fact remains that capital investment in and productivity of Indian agriculture remains significantly behind other sectors like (service sector and to a lesser extent manufacturing). The

shifting of male population towards these has burdened the rural women with the low productivity employment of agriculture.

Conditions of Employment

The forgoing discussion would have made it clear that the vast majority of the rural population works under conditions of informality, whether they be 'self-employed' peasants and artisans or they be wage earners. As noted earlier only 13% of the rural labour force can look forward to 'regular salary or wage' and these are overwhelmingly (87%) men. The PLF survey tells us about the precarity of even this miniscule minority.

A degree of security is provided to the worker if he or she is formally engaged through a written contract which then may enable them to invoke prevalent labour laws in their defence if there is any violation of the contract. The fact of the matter is that bulk of the rural labouring population (in non-peasant-agricultural sector) which 'enjoys' regular income from salaries or wages, amounting to nearly 72% of male workers are engaged without any written contract. While the figure (54%) for women workers of the same kind may appear brighter, in actual fact is misleading as the total number of women workers in this category is miniscule (mere 2% of rural female population).

To put it differently, less than one tenth of the rural population works under conditions of formal employment. The rest are either small peasants or workers without any formal protection. (We need to qualify this statement as the peasant population may own land which entitles them to some legal protection as property owners.)

The absence of any formal arrangement naturally precludes other essential features of decent employment like weekly holidays and fixed working time etc. paid leave including leave during sickness, maternity, etc. The survey shows that more than 58% of rural non agricultural regular wage earners are not entitled to regular paid leave. It also appears that this condition has been intensifying over the years as the percentage of workers without paid leave appears to be steadily increasing over the last decade. The figure for women is 49% and the same qualification would apply here as above. It may be noted that a high proportion of regular wage earning women would be working as school teachers or as government servants and as such would be entitled to leave.

Likewise most of this category of workers were not entitled to any social security benefits (pension, gratuity, provident fund, health or maternity benefits). According to the survey results nearly 52% of male workers in this category were not eligible for any social security benefits.

The data on hours of work indicate minor variations over various seasons, but it broadly shows that almost all categories of worker worked for more than six days a week and put between 46 to 58 hours every week. The self employed men who constitute the bulk of the rural workforce, on an average put in 51 hours of work a week and worked almost on all days of the week (more than seven hours every day of the week). The hours of work for women in the self employed sector ranges between 37 to 40 hours a week, an average of five and a half hours every day of the week. In addition they would be attending to domestic work like cooking, cleaning , attending to children and the old and ill persons.

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

The regular salaried/wage workers of the rural areas appear to be putting in the longest hours of work, the men working for nearly 58 hours a week (more than eight hours every day of the week); women in this category also work for over 50 hours a week (again averaging over seven hours every day of the week). This is the price they pay for their 'regular' salaries or wages. In a highly insecure labour market, relative job security comes with a stiff bill.

In contrast, casual workers in the rural areas typically get less work: Male casual workers get work for around 5.6 days a week and appear to get on an average only 45.3 hours of work a week. (Table 46, A19) Women casual workers too, get work for five days a week and an average of 37.3 hours work a week..(Table 46, A20) However, this unskilled work can be highly exhausting so much so that despite putting in lesser hours of work, they feel disinclined to work more as this category of workers shows least willingness to extend hours of work. Strangely casual workers work longest (46.4 hours a week) during months when the wages are at the lowest (July to September) and shortest (44.2 hours per week) during months when the wages are

highest (April to June). Quite possibly, it can mean that given the low wages during the monsoon months, workers are forced to work longer to make ends meet.

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

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

Earnings of Rural labouring people

Let us first take the category of Regular wage or salary earners (Table 42 of PLFS report) as their earnings can be clearly expressed in terms of monthly earnings. As mentioned above they constitute 13% of the rural working population. We learn that even though the earnings are supposed to be regular, they are not constant over the year and vary from season to season. The range for male workers is between Rs 12,650 (in monsoon months) to Rs. 14,440/ (in Spring). Averaging the seasonal variation, we get a figure of monthly salary/wage of Rs. 13,533 for men and Rs. 8938 for women. Assuming from the above discussion on working hours, that women work for 200 hours a month and men work for 232 hours a month, we get the following hourly averages for their respective incomes: women Rs 45 per hour and men Rs 59 per hour. Women thus get about 77.5% of the men's wages per hour.

Casual labourers as we saw earlier constitute about 29.1 % of the rural working population (which will work out to be around 77,300,000 persons amounting to 8% of the total Indian population). They thus represent a large segment of Indian population once we add their household dependents.

It is rather difficult to calculate the earnings of Casual Workers as we have to put together a number of tables to get at the figures and we don't really have all the necessary information. Casual workers' earning depends upon the number of days they find employment and the rate of daily wages prevailing in the season. To add to the complication, the PLFs points to three parallel rural labour markets – the commercial rate, the general public works rate and MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) rate. The daily wage rate in each of these categories of work varies and varies with the

season too. However, we do not know how many days work an average casual worker gets in each of these categories and as such will have to depend upon some averaging and approximation to figure out how much an average casual worker may actually earn in a month.

The range of variation between the three rural casual labour markets is of some significance. The following table summarises the issue:

Season	Male				Female			
	Commercial	Public works	MNREGA	Average	Commercial	Public works	MNREGA	Average
July-Sept	253	158	141	184	166	142	135	148
Oct-Dec	265	161	157	194	172	144	138	151
Jan-Mar	270	171	152	198	175	134	165	158
Apr-Jun	282	142	138	187	179	119	131	143

(PLFS Table 43, 44)

A cursory look at this table will show that the public works rates are about 60% of the commercial market rates. While the MNREGA rates are still lower, one can understand their being pegged lower due to its being a minimum guarantee welfare scheme. This cannot be said of public works done for the government projects like road building. Pegging them far below the market rate clearly indicates that the state actually engages in fleecing the rural casual workers. But there is more to it. Just when market rates in the countryside is the highest in the summer, the public works and the MNREGA depresses the wages unnaturally, to depress the overall wage levels to the benefit of the rural kulaks. In these months the public work rates are half the market rates. This indicates a sordid connivance between the state bureaucracy and the rural capitalists to the disadvantage of the rural proletarians.

We add in passing that contrary to principles of equal pay for equal work mandated for the state and for the MNREGA, their daily wage rates are much lower for women as compared to men. Let us now return to the earnings of casual workers.

Table 9 Average number of days worked per week by Casual workers and Estimated Monthly Earnings by season										
Season	Male					Female				
	Days per week	Hours per week	Average wage rate per day in Rs	Earnings per month in Rs	Average Per Hour Rate in Rs	Days per week	Hours per week	Average wage rate per day in Rs	Earnings per month in Rs	Average Per Hour Rate in Rs
July-Sept	5.8	46.4	184	4269	23	5.2	39	148	3078	20
Oct-Dec	5.7	45.8	194	4423	24	5.3	39.2	151	3201	20
Jan-Mar	5.6	45.3	198	4435	24	5	37.3	158	3160	21
Apr-Jun	5.5	44.2	187	4114	23	5	37.7	143	2860	19

(Table 9 is an extrapolation based on Tables 43 and 44 of the PLFS report)

What strikes one is the way the average hourly rate is maintained through the year. The Public Works and the Employment Guarantee scheme appear to be assisting in keeping the wage rates constant by depressing wages in high demand seasons. This also appears to close the gender gap in hourly wage rates. This hypotheses needs to be further investigated and checked by field studies.

What is of importance is the stark contrast this presents to the earnings of the regular salaried / wage earners. Casual workers are paid less than half the hourly rate of the regular wage earners and more important the latter being employed for longer time, end up earning about three times more in a month.

We shall now turn to the most complex segment of all, the 'self employed' workers. This omnibus category includes the peasant farmers (who should be the bulk of the 'own account' self employed who don't hire in labour), capitalist farmers who hire agricultural labourers, small shopkeepers, petty artisans, repair shop operators, etc. These constitute 58% of the rural workforce, with men dominating the profile. To recall the information from Table 2, the own account workers constitute about 41% of rural workforce and helpers in the same category constitute about 17%. Unfortunately, the report does not give us any break up of the earnings of the two categories, assum-

ing that the ‘helpers’ are largely unpaid. Two points strike us strongly on even a cursory reading of the table below.

Table 10 Monthly Gross Earnings of Rural Self Employed workers (Rs)		
	Male	Female
Jul-Sept	8,493	4,342
Oct-Dec	8,807	4,104
Jan-Mar	8,864	4,121
Apr-Jun	9,657	3,291
Average	8,955	3,965

(Table 45, PLFS)

The earnings of the self employed varies between seasons and the earnings of women are one third to half that of the men. Both these are to be expected given the seasonality of agriculture and also the total control of male patriarchs over the household modes of production. The earnings are termed ‘gross’ in that they include both ‘profit and wages’. The profit ought to accrue to the capital investment in the form of land, equipment and animals. Also these are income of the entire family and not of individuals as in the case of regular salaried or casual wage workers. The average monthly income projection of about Rs. 9000 for men and Rs. 4000 for women, is only marginally better than the earnings of the casual workers. That our peasants have been earning pitifully little from their farming, is pretty well known and if we take this gross earning as any indication, it falls far short of a decent living requirements.



Conclusion

The PLFS and related reports of NSSO surveys leave no doubt as to the predominantly rural and male character of Indian labouring force. The rural labour force constitutes about 72% of the total labour force of India (about 29 million of 41 million). Likewise, men constitute 78% of the total labour force. These two features of the Indian Labour Force, have immense implications for the democratic and working class movements. Agrarian distress among working peasants and unemployment, precarity and low wage employment pose a formidable task of organising the rural proletariat and forging an alliance with the distressed poor peasants.

If our interpretation of the PLFS categories is tenable, ie, the 'own-account self-employed' in the rural context being predominantly peasants and traditional artisans, then about 41% of the rural workforce can be termed as peasants and artisans and another 17% of the workforce paid and unpaid workers associated with them. That constitutes the majority of rural workforce and also more than 41% of the entire national workforce.

The rural proletariat is in all probability covered under the category of 'casual labour' constituting 29% of the rural workforce and 21% of the entire workforce of the country. While the peasant distress has found much expression in the form of marches and press coverage of farm crises, the rural proletariat has largely remained unorganised and unrepresented.

The fact of women not being visible in the labour force data of course does not imply that they are mere 'consumers' not engaged in any productive work. The fact remains that women continue to share unequal burden of physical labour; the problem is in the definition of labour which excludes most reproductive work done at the household whose burden is particularly higher in situations with limited socialisation of work as in the rural peasant economy. While recognising this contribution of women to the economy, the fact remains that in being kept out of production of exchange values women are denied opportunities of breaking out of domestic drudgery and engaging in new ways of life. What has been of concern is not only the fact that female participation in 'work' has been low but that it has been declining steadily over decades. This can be explained as the assertion of patriarchy which seeks to keep the newly emerging market oriented employment as a preserve of men and edge women out. The confinement of women

to household work has an implication for the economy as a whole as it really means that the household sector (itself a non-capitalist unit of production) is forced to subsidise the labour of men in the capitalist market. Some of these issues have been discussed at length by feminists, but much empirical study remains to be done.

What is of deep concern is the steady and drastic decline in the participation of rural women in the labour force from 33% of all rural women in 1993-94 to 18% in 2017-18. Of these women in the labour force nearly 38% are engaged as unpaid helpers in Self-employment units and 32% are casual workers. This gives the kind of profile of working women in the countryside – mainly engaged in unpaid and unskilled work. At the same time, it is noteworthy that the percentage of labouring rural women engaged in regular salaried jobs has increased significantly from about 3% in 1993-4 to 10.5% in 2017-18. This is the only heartening factor in the otherwise bleak picture.

It is important to note that while more and more women are indeed seeking work, there is a shortage of employment opportunities to absorb them. The unemployment rate among women (by current weekly status) has increased from 3% to 8% between 2011 to 2018. Indeed, unemployment among educated women (secondary and graduation) is extremely high, about 17.3%. The Modi government has much to answer for this alarming rise in unemployment among the educated youth.

Some of these special issues relating to women in the rural sector need to be flagged and has to be taken up seriously for both organising the women and also raising demands and framing programs for facilitating greater participation of women in the labour force and also enable access to employment with dignity of labour and higher remuneration.

We had the opportunity to look into the working hours of the self employed, the salaried workers and the casual workers and also their remuneration/earnings. The ‘informal’ setting of the work which essentially denies the workers any social protection and does not even recognise them as workers calls for innovative strategies for mobilisation, organisation and raising meaningful demands.

March 2020

Iran

Party of Labor (Toufan)

Imperialism: Enemy of the Peoples and States!

a) Independence and National Sovereignty

Freedom in its basic sense is nothing but the liberation of human beings from the constraints of nature and society. Freedom is achievable only when human beings are capable of gaining knowledge about nature and society and about the objective laws governing them and are willing to change them; in other words, to have the desire to gain freedom.

In the social scene, the achieving of freedom, as in nature, always requires constant and continuous struggle. But, unlike in nature, it accompanies the denial or limiting freedom of one section of society that has gained its freedom through the oppression of others. For example, the freedom of women weakens the sovereignty of men and all forces that are involved in the oppression of women, and the struggle of nations for independence makes the sphere of influence and power of the colonists smaller and weaker. In other words, human societies are the battleground of various classes and forces which have different and even conflicting interests and goals and are constantly struggling to achieve these interests and gain "freedom". The struggle for freedom and the denial of freedom constitutes the broadest and most fundamental part of human activity in existing social issues as well as in nature.

Independence is basically a sort of freedom, one that guarantees the possibility of non-compliance as well as obedience. This independence for a country is nothing but the liberation from subordination to the influence and dictate of others. Sovereignty is the result and effect of national independence and the guarantee of its preservation. Sovereignty means the complete independence of a state to solve its internal and external problems. Any interference, assigning order, pressure, and exerting force – let alone military intervention – against a state threatens its sovereignty, independence, and freedom. Sovereignty and independence is the tower within which the peoples and nations of the world will be able to create their own state, society, culture, and future without being imposed on by another state or pow-

er. Any restriction and denial of one country's sovereignty and independence by others means suppressing the freedom of the country for the benefit of others. Violating the right to sovereignty of others under various deceptive excuses such as defending human rights, democracy, etc., means the others are deemed to be incapable of determining their own destiny.

The view that recognizes national independence and sovereignty for some and void for others, is an integral part of the ideology of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. The more expansion there is of the capitalist economies, of capitalist-driven politics, of the spheres of influence of imperialism, and the gaining of special military-political-economic privileges, the more the other countries' freedom and independence will be seriously threatened. Imperialism is by nature oppressive and invasive. Its power lies in the perceived or relative weakness of others. Imperialism does not recognize or accept equality and justice. The rule of capital, and particularly of imperialist capital, threatens equality and social justice. The colorful U.S. and European imperialism's claim of the necessity of a war against Yugoslavia for the sake of defending the people of Kosovo was no more than an old lie. This was not the first time that world imperialism has violated the sovereignty and independence of a weaker state by its aggressive military invasion. What distinguishes the imperialist NATO attack on Yugoslavia from other imperialist aggressions is not that it undermines and discredits the rights, sovereignty, and independence of others at the global level, but that it explicitly declares these issues to be "obsolete" in order to start up a new era of imperialist wars to crush the resistance of so-called "rogue" nations and states in order to maintain the "New World Order". And all these are done under the banner of "defending democracy and human rights"!

In other words, imperialism, and in particular U.S. imperialism, seems to have become so distressed and uneasy and has suffered so much from the absence of democracy and the violation of human rights in many other countries that it has ultimately sacrificed the rights of nations and their sovereignty and invaded and destroyed other countries in order to bring them the "gift" of human and democratic rights!

b) The aggressive war and the defensive war of independence

It can be said that the first victim of any aggression is the truth. In fact due to reaching a dead end in their policies, all aggressors and

warlords are forced to pursue war as the last weapon in order to develop and achieve their economic and strategic interests. But these wars have always used an excuse to mobilize and attract people. In other words, they simply lie to the people in order to win the war. Europe's savage slaughter of the indigenous people following the discovery of the American continent and the killing of the "savage Indians" and the annihilation of the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand are some of the examples. Most of the time, the lies are accompanied by justifications such as "responding to enemy attacks" as in the case of the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964 at the start of Vietnam war. The Bush war against Iraq was launched under the banner of an "attack on United States of America" in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. The attack on Yugoslavia was justified under the pretense of "preventing the killing of the nation's people." Aggressive wars in Libya, Syria and Yemen were carried out under the banner of humanity and saving civilian lives. Predatory and aggressive wars always require a "humanitarian" cover to deceive public opinion.

The very nature of war is determined by policies that have ultimately made war historically necessary. The imperialists' invasion of Yugoslavia in 1999 was in fact a continuation of the policy of disintegration and weakening of the united Yugoslavia. The fragmentation of Yugoslavia was possible only in the face of a war. The war began with the "goal" of creating a "peaceful region" without "violence and tyranny of the Serbs". Using these lies, the imperialists attacked the national sovereignty and independence of Yugoslavia.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, with the goal of colonial domination of the continents of Asia and Africa, the new European bourgeoisie introduced the theory of "cosmopolitanism," which Kant, Schiller, and Goethe worked on with good intentions against the prevailing chauvinism at the time. They made it their motto to discredit the borders of the countries of these regions. In the early 1990s, on the basis of the globalization of capital and production and under the new conditions of the collapse of the social-imperialist system, the U.S. became an undisputed power, the borders of countries were declared invalid again under the cover of "historical necessity" and "creating a world market". And interestingly, those borders lost the necessity of their preservation where general imperialist interests were concerned. The "New World Order" meant the unipolar imperialist world, the

successor to the former capitalist and socialist bipolar world (or Eastern bloc).

The relationship of imperialist countries with weak countries (read: the "New Order") is the essence of all politics that has been implemented the world over since the 1990s. This is a policy of aggression and colonial dominance, all under the cover of modern globalized imperialism. Imperialism has become the most savage and anti-civilization force in human history today. The U.S., driven by capital and with the world's largest military force at its disposal, considers its borders so sacred – unlike the borders of Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, etc. – that they feel compelled to undertake a brutal and endless war in the Middle East in the name of "fighting terrorism". And now the same policy of aggression is being implemented in Syria and Yemen.

The reality is that globalization is not a denial of national independence. The political fate of a country should be determined by its people in accordance with international law. A state that makes decisions, not on the basis of imperialist interests but on the basis of national interests, guarantees the preservation of that country's political independence. If the outcome is not favored by the imperialists (as in all former socialist countries, and even now in North Korea, Cuba, and Venezuela, etc.) or if it causes dissatisfaction among its people through oppressive policies and the use of force and authoritarianism, it is up to its people to change the situation. It is up to the people to determine the scope of the non-antagonistic contradictions during an imperialist invasion. It is up to the people to determine how to conduct their struggle. It is up to the people to determine how best to confront authoritarian tyranny after the elimination of imperialist aggression and sanctions and the change of reconcilable conflicts to antagonistic conflicts. It is up to the people alone to overthrow tyranny and replace the old rule with a new one.

Invasive wars of imperialism and the occupation of countries ruled by tyrannical governments (such as Iraq and Libya) cause disorder and chaotic situations for the people. Such wars create discord and social and political tensions, intensify the conflicts within the societies, and generate crisis. Replacing Assad or Gaddafi or the Islamic Republic of Iran with a regime that implements imperialist programs and policies, though under the pretense of democracy, is not a forward development; instead, it represents multiple steps backward accompanied by inextricable entanglement in a web of dependency.

The forward development of a society means replacing its tyrannical and corrupt government with an independent and popular government. Positive development means the rejection of Gaddafi's despotism and authoritarianism in Libya, the rejection of the Islamic Republic in Iran, and the preservation of the positive factor of independence in both of them.

c) “Sanctions and economic boycott”: the 21st century language of colonial aggression

The economic sanction and blockade of a country is a direct violation of the UN Charter, and it means the violation of the rights of that nation. One cannot oppose the violation of the rights of the Iranian nation but support the reactionary policy of economic sanctions as "positive", as "revolutionary", or as a "harbinger of socialism" for Iran.

The nations of the world, regardless of their sizes and religions such as Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, etc., regardless of their economic power, political influence, and military power, all have equal rights and should enjoy mutual respect. Through the use of threats and defamation, the aggressive powers attack the weaker nations of the world, humiliate them, and create a special status for themselves. To respect the rights of the nations is to believe in the principle of democracy. To reject those rights is to accept and embrace the most vile and inhumane elements of colonial tyranny.

The tragic fate of the Iraqi national chauvinist Kurds contains many lessons from which we can learn. The national chauvinist Kurds were in favor of the economic siege of Iraq that killed 700,000 Iraqi Arab children. The Kurds supported the invasion of Iraq by the U.S. imperialists and their allies with the vain hope that they might benefit from the bloody aftermath. Today, they have become a base of the Zionist presence in the region. The fact that the invasion was a violation of human rights and of the rights of Iraq was of little importance to them. Kurdish national chauvinists naively hoped for freedom and “independence” under the U.S. occupation of Iraq. And now they are witnessing the Turkish government’s invasion of Syria with the aim of violating the rights of the Kurdish people and consequently punishing the Kurdish chauvinists who are in opposition to the pan-Ottoman and pan-Turkish policies of Recep Erdogan. Today, they are forced to condemn Turkish aggression against Syria. Taking an opportunistic stand instead of a principled one will lead to disaster.

Every democratic country condemns such aggression, regardless of who the perpetrator is.

Even under the pretext of "progressive" intentions, one cannot violate the democratic rights of a sovereign nation. The grand teacher of Marxism condemns pushing socialist revolution onto other countries because this "good intention" has not come out of the very heart of society or from its need for growth. It is, instead, a provocative and mechanical act. Invasion of nations and violations of the rights of nations cannot be justified by the nature of the heads of state. Those who advocate the invasion of a given country by using the argument that a tyrannical government is at work and is violating human rights have always wound up siding with the self-serving cruelty of imperialism and colonialism.

d) Dominance of the Dollar: another tool of suppression

Current developments tell us that U.S. imperialism tries to preserve the dominance of the U.S. dollar as the default form of currency exchange in the world. As the most powerful economic and military country after the Second World War, the United States of America replaced the British Pound with the U.S. dollar as a means of cementing its hold over global exchange. The U.S. dollar was originally guaranteed to be backed by gold. The U.S. government voided this guarantee as a consequence of waging costly wars in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, covering the expense of these wars with the printing of extra dollars that no longer had gold backing. To save the central bank that had gold reserves, Nixon separated the dollar from gold and let supply and demand in the competitive market determine its value. The exchange of oil and other commodities in terms of dollars and the emphasis on the U.S. dollar as the only valid and stable medium of exchange of global trade gave the United States of America the power to seize control over the global banking and financial systems.

The Euro, emerging as a competitor to the dollar, lacks the leverage the U.S. holds to maintain its economic dominance. When Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein decided to sell their oil in Euros, the U.S. imperialists prepared to invade their countries. Eventually, Iraq and Libya were destroyed by wars of aggression. The occupation of these countries actually preserved the dominance of the dollar in the world. The Islamic Republic of Iran also decided to sell Iranian oil in both dollars and Euros. This incensed the U.S. as the

dual-currency policy not only increased the credibility of the Euro, it also shook the dominance of the dollar, the world's most powerful currency. Along with this Iranian move on the dollar, global resistance by China, in cooperation with the Russian Federation, India, South Africa, Brazil, and other countries in the world including Latin America, emerged to end the dominance of the dollar, which had been systematically destroying the foreign exchange reserves of many countries. Conducting barter transactions, exchanging Chinese currency that has become a member of the global currency basket, establishing the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, establishing a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union and establishing a BRICS group of emerging economic powers (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are among the tools the Chinese government has set up to counter the power of the dollar. This move has been backed by many countries.

U.S. imperialism, which has lagged behind in many economic arenas and is trying to boost its economy by violating the “respectable rules” of the World Trade Organization and abolishing the “respected and sanctified” neoliberal economic policies for its own country, has to draw a wall around itself and support its domestic production. In such circumstances, it is imperative for the United States of America to rely on both military aggression and sanctions that are, themselves, the basis for military aggression in order to maintain the domination of the dollar.

Aggressive U.S. policy toward the Middle East and Iran is part of this vital, general, and strategic policy and should be politically evaluated in the context of this dominance. The United States is witness-



ing that China's Silk Road bypasses all U.S. dominance of the seas and straits, and Chinese and East Asian goods arrive at European markets about ten days earlier than they do through the U.S.-controlled seas. The U.S. is a staunch enemy of the Silk Road and does not tolerate its extension towards Europe. Since Iran is a country that is adjacent to fifteen other countries and because it connects the Caspian Sea with the Persian Gulf, it includes more than 2,000 kilometers of the Silk Road, and monitors Middle East oil and gas, it threatens the hegemony of the dollar by announcing its readiness to trade in Euros. The U.S. hostility towards the Iranian people is strategic and has nothing to do with the polite or impolite conduct of this or that Iranian government agent. The United States of America seeks only a puppet Iran that dances to its tune.

In the present world, an important front has been formed. In order to maintain their independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty, and in order to prevent their destruction and to preserve their prosperity, nations must unite to end the global dominance of the dollar.

The United States of America has established military bases everywhere it could to protect the empire of the dollar and has deployed troops in oil-rich areas of the world that it does not intend to leave. Their wishful presence in Iran also comes with the intention of maintaining the domination of the dollar and destroying our country. The Iraqi people today are demanding that the occupiers leave Iraq, but the United States is saying that it will not leave Iraq. The reality is that the United States is in critical need of Iran as a springboard to preserve its empire of the dollar, to monitor the Strait of Hormuz and protect Saudi Arabia, to restrict the activities of China and Russia, and to enslave the countries of the region.

Those sellouts that ally themselves with the U.S. in imposing sanctions on the Iranian people and in overthrowing the Islamic Republic ignore the role of the masses in the struggle against the capitalist regime of the Islamic Republic. They know that when the struggle rises in Iran, the people will tie the struggle against the Islamic regime with the struggle against imperialism and Zionism in the region and will stand with Arab and Turkish nations to expel those imperialists and Zionists from the region.

March 2020

Italy

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

The “New Silk Road” (OBOR) in Italy: inter-imperialist struggle, bourgeois interests and revisionist somersaults

In March 2019, the Italian and Chinese governments signed a “Memorandum of Understanding” and 29 financial, commercial and institutional agreements under the initiative named “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR), promoted by Chinese imperialism.

The entry of weak Italian imperialism, a member of NATO, EU and G7, among the partners of China in this initiative, has led to political polemics and has pointed out one fact: Italy is today directly implicated in the contention between US imperialism and Chinese imperialism for world hegemony.

What is the project “One Belt, One Road”?

OBOR is a colossal strategic project launched by Xi Jinping in 2013, contextually to the proposal for the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which financially supports the project.

This project aims to reinforce and improve the integration, connection, cooperation and commercial outlets among China and the countries of Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Eastern Africa, the Middle East and Europe (especially the countries of central-eastern Europe and those that face the Mediterranean Sea).

In the course of its continuous development, OBOR has progressively extended its ramifications as far as Latin America.

OBOR operates on two components, the land one, the “New Silk Road Economic Belt”, and the sea one, the “New Maritime Silk Road”. It involves 65 countries (14 of which are members of the EU) and 15 Chinese provinces, which altogether include about 75% of the world’s population, 75% of the energy reserves and 55% of the global GDP.

The total value of the project – which should be completed in thirty years – exceeds \$1,400 billion dollars.

As every strategic plan (such as the Marshall Plan), OBOR has manifold dimensions and ramifications: economic-financial, commercial, political, military, cultural, etc.

The heart of OBOR consists in the development of infrastructure and “connectivity” (transport, energy, telecommunications, money circulation, etc.) as a basis for economic integration.

As to the economic plan, the ambitious Chinese project aims at the creation of an integrated network of supply of raw materials and valorization of capital, above all in the spheres of the production, transport and energy.

All this requires massive investments in ports, airports, international railways, motor-ways, container transport, optical fiber, means of conveyance of energy resources, and raw materials indispensable to support Chinese economic growth, as well as the circulation of the commodities produced.

From the financial point of view, a priority objective of the Chinese leadership is the internationalization of the Renminbi, centering on the London financial market.

With OBOR, “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (socialism on paper, capitalism in practice) is struggling to solve the serious problem of the overproduction of capital and commodities, finding the possibility of financial investment and market outlets in the Western countries; at the same time, it struggles to buy up raw materials in Central Asia and Africa.

OBOR is the response of Chinese imperialism to US imperialism’s strategic plan named “Pivot to Asia”, a policy of economic, political and military encirclement of China. This is a response which takes advantage of the political and leadership vacuum left by the USA in Asia and Europe.

The fundamental aim of OBOR is to develop deep economic ties with many countries, to extend China’s influence in the world and undermine US positions, changing the balance of forces and laying the foundation for its world hegemony.

OBOR is an expression – both concrete and symbolic – of the rise of China as an imperialist power with world ambitions, which has enormous financial supplies and monopolies able to compete technologically with the USA (for example, Huawei).

Consequently, this umbrella project, expressing the megalomania of monopoly capitalism with Chinese characteristics, is inevitably destined to clash with the regime imposed by the USA that does not

want to lose its dominant position, spheres of influence and system of alliances.

From the Marxist-Leninist point of view, the projects and foreign policy of China – a country fully integrated into the world capitalist-imperialist system, with thousands of billionaires who thrive at expense of the working class, have nothing to do with socialism and proletarian internationalism.

On the contrary, they are organic to a strategy that supports capitalist interests and pursues expansionist ambitions of submission and subjugation of the peoples.

When China creates markets and infrastructure, when it grants long-term loans to the dependent countries, when Xi Jinping says that he wants to bring forth “the great cause of Chinese socialism,” all this is done in order to absorb the wealth of the peoples, to conquer strategic positions, to expand Chinese spheres of influence and its military presence (as demonstrated by the opening of a military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa, by increasing its naval presence to protect the OBOR shipping routes, by the Chinese exports of arms, the political and diplomatic intervention of China in many conflicts, etc.).

The strategy and policies of the Chinese leaders are directed against the revolution and aim to make China an imperialist superpower, as comrade Enver Hoxha had foreseen more than forty years ago (see “Imperialism and the Revolution”, 1978).

The role of Italy in OBOR

According to Chinese intentions, Italy will play a key role in OBOR, in consideration of its geographic position as a “doorway to Europe” for the Mediterranean countries and an access road to the Central European markets.

Our country would be practically the infrastructural terminal of the OBOR routes that start in China to lead to Europe.

The Italian adhesion to OBOR is considered vital by the Chinese leaders for the success of their strategic megaproject.

And for the Italian bourgeoisie? In the last decades all the fundamental problems of Italian imperialism have worsened: there have been three recessions, a protracted economic stagnation, lack of capital, a giant National Debt whose refinancing is increasingly difficult, an inadequate and obsolete infrastructural network, an always more unbridled competition with old and new rivals, the consequences of protectionist policies and trade wars, etc.

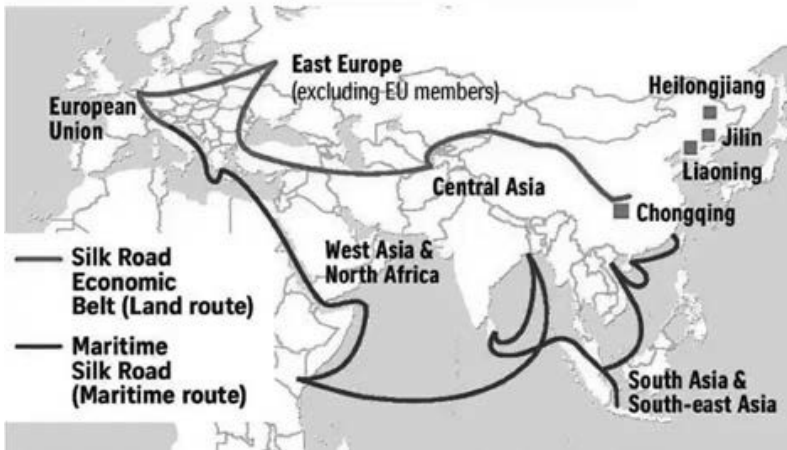
In this situation, different monopoly and capitalist sectors (industrialists of the mechanical industry, rubber, the shipyard sector, big logistic enterprises, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, food and textile industries, small and medium export companies) have seen in OBOR a chance to obtain financial investments, modernize the infrastructure system, relaunch the “Made in Italy” campaign, increase the share of exports to the Chinese market (currently it absorbs only 2.7 % of Italian exports, equal to 11 billion euros, while imports are more than 27 billion euros).

In the last years, these interests have been represented by the bourgeois governments and the highest institutional offices, which have looked more and more toward China, trying to escape the historic decline of Italian imperialism.

If the acquisition of the Pirelli company (partially financed with capital from the “Silk Road Fund”) had indicated the extent of the interests at stake, the official visit to China –in 2017 – by Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic, and former Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, made clear that Italy was preparing to enter OBOR.

Subsequent to the signing of the Memorandum of 2019, the Conte government – in which there are some pro-China members (especially the ministers of the populist M5S, 5 Star Movement) – has determined that Italy will be the landing point of the “Maritime Silk Road”. Accordingly many ports, have been made available for import

China's One Belt, One Road initiative



and export (Venice, Trieste and Ravenna – which are part of the project of the “Five Ports of the Adriatic” for the docking of ships coming from Shanghai via the Red Sea – and also Genoa, Palermo, Naples and Gioia Tauro, where Chinese shipping agents have made large investments), roads, railways (especially trans-Alpine ones), bridges, interports and logistic hubs, such as the Mortara hub (which will have a considerable logistic role in the regulation of the flow of commodities foreseen by the OBOR project), systems of civil aviation, telecommunications, research and testing centers (Florence, L’Aquila, Bari, Matera, Pula, Catania).

In the last year, the OBOR process has moved forward: the Italian Ministry of Economic Development has formed an executive committee for China in order to further reinforce Italian-Chinese trade relations; the network of institutions, associations, etc., belonging to the “Italian Institute One Belt One Road” has expanded; at Ningbo, China, an Italian-Chinese Industrial Park was created as a platform for Chinese-Italian cooperation.

The trips of capitalists, politicians, administrators, academics, meetings and events dedicated to Italian-Chinese cooperation and to propaganda for the OBOR project follow one another, while the year of Italian-Chinese culture and tourism is about to begin, which interprets the “New Silk Road” as a renewal of the ancient traditions of commerce in order to generate consensus.

The Italian bourgeoisie is playing two sides

Some days before the signing of the “Memorandum of Understanding” between the Italian and US governments, the Trump administration warned that there is “no need for the Italian government to lend legitimacy to China’s infrastructure vanity project” (Garrett Marquis, special assistant to Trump, March 10, 2019). US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that he was “saddened by the developments”.

The manner found by the Italian government to sell the USA on its decision to join OBOR, judged dangerous by the US government (Italy is the first NATO and G7 country to join OBOR), was to reassure Trump that it is only a business agreement, not a political one. In addition, the populist Minister Di Maio, signer of the “Memorandum”, declared that “the contents of the memorandum that we signed are nothing to worry about, nothing about 5G or any agreement on strategic telecommunications”.

This happened while Salvini's ultra-reactionary League advanced some reservations and demanded the use of the “*golden power*” (powers that the government can utilize in cases of national security) in relation to the penetration of Huawei in Italy, in order to calm down Trump.

The corrupt Italian bourgeoisie speaks of “Italy first”, but in reality it is seeking, as usual, to play both sides, remaining in the US orbit, but seeking to break free of the rigid US control in order to secure economic spaces; to favor China and BRICS investments in order to reduce Italian dependence on the US; to sell Italian treasury bonds to both rivals, as emerged during the mission to China of Minister of Finance Tria and Premier Conte's subsequent visit to Washington.

But the subordinate Italian bourgeoisie is kidding itself if it thinks it can serve two masters during a dispute between them, as Harlequin did.

If yesterday it took advantage of some position and concessions on secondary questions, now it can't. The support for the manifold OBOR project not only has commercial consequences, but also geo-strategic and military ones. So, every attempt to balance conflicting directions is frustrated by US imperialism, headed by Trump, who is forcing EU countries to acknowledge China as their most dangerous rival.

The new US strategic doctrine, based on chauvinism, unilateralism, protectionism and militarism to reaffirm Yankee supremacy, has China as its main objective, which it accuses of threatening “American power, influence and interests”.

The USA, in order to defend its dominant position in the world imperialist system and to contain the rise of China, has decided to hinder and stop by any means the challenge of OBOR, defined by Trump as “an insult”.

Consequently, the US administration came out against the Chinese attempt to penetrate the subordinate European allied countries through trade agreements, and created some agencies, such as the US International Development Finance Corporation, to counteract Chinese financial projects.

Washington is determined to oppose the growth of China's economic and political influence in Italy, which is a major player for the control of Europe and a geo-strategical platform to easily reach the theatres of war in the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. It

should be remembered that Italy hosts the largest US military bases outside its territory.

The EU Commission also expressed its disappointment. Troubled by China's economic and political influence, and by the breaking up of the European bloc in the confrontation with China, it labelled the Asian giant an economical competitor and systemic rival. In the same days in which the Italian government signed the "Memorandum" with Xi Jinping, the Commission appealed for the "full unity" of the EU. Moreover, the EU Commission adopted a "strategy of connectivity" and other mechanisms to limit Chinese penetration in strategic sectors.

On its part China, after having made contracts with 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the western Balkans, after having purchased majority shares in the Greek port of Piraeus and started the construction of a railway between Belgrade and Budapest, and having acquired – through the logistic and shipping giant COSCO – control of important shares in the principal North-European ports (Rotterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg), is now pushing to utilize Italy as a springboard for its penetration into the EU, in order to influence it with its social-imperialist policy.

The sharpening of the contradictions in the world arena is restricting the room for maneuver of weak Italian imperialism, which will be more and more held in the grip of the competition between the USA and China.

The international position of imperialist Italy is worsening and will continue to worsen; it will be more and more an "earthenware pot among iron pots".

In consequence of many ambiguities and reversals, the parasitic Italian bourgeoisie is dragging our country into the vortex of a knife fight between US and Chinese imperialisms, whose heavy cost will be paid by the working class and the popular masses.

The somersaults of the Italian revisionists

The USA, the most aggressive and dangerous imperialism of our epoch, is using its whole political-military-media apparatus in order to maintain control of the Italian peninsula and to block the Chinese advance into Italy and Europe, in the framework of a global policy of containment of the Asian giant.

China is activating all its tools to ensure a major influence, economic and political spaces in Italy.

In particular, the revisionist “Communist Party of China” (CPC) is putting onto play its propagandists disguised as communists. In our country it has found in the revisionist P“C”I and in another mirror-party, the opportunist P“C”, its most eager supporters.

In recent months these pseudo-communists have been conducting a propaganda offensive to put over the idea that China is not a rapacious imperialist country, but a socialist country, a friend of the workers and peoples; that China is not a country that is rapidly rearming in order to affirm its interests and— over the next decades — to supersede the USA for world hegemony, but that it is a factor for peace and detente in the international scene; that the CPC is not an ultra-revisionist party dominated by a clique of billionaires, but a communist and internationalist party; that OBOR is not an imperialist plan with economic aspects and strategic aims, but “an opportunity for development”; that OBOR will not benefit the exploiters and speculators, it will not cause further damage to the environment, will not increase the pressure on the working class, but is a project that will bring great benefit to the workers (in reality, the implementation of the Chinese project raises important questions about rules, standards, respect for labor agreements, etc.).

The revisionists and opportunists are supporting the propaganda operation of the “China Dream”, placing themselves behind the chariot of sectors of the capitalist bourgeoisie interested in the development of OBOR.

In the last months we have seen various conferences, interviews, statements, etc., with which the former pro-Soviet revisionists moved over to the court of Xi Jinping; these are somersaults worthy of the best circus act.

We would not be surprised if behind these ideological and propagandistic acrobatic tricks there were prosaic interests, because our national cheaters are evidently attracted by the main argument that a Chinese top manager, “comrade” Du Fei, President of the China Communications Construction Company, a colossus of Chinese state capitalism, put forward some months ago when, speaking like a Mafia boss, he said: “*Europe, Africa, South America, the cake is big, let’s all eat together*”.

This attractive argument, which has shown full light on the essence of the policy of the Chinese wheeler-dealer, characterized by the total absence of socialist principles, is music to the ears of our exploiters, greedy for profits and rents, as well as for the leaders of

the bourgeois and revisionist parties, in deep crisis of electoral consensus and economic contributions.

The position toward Chinese imperialism is a determining factor

As communists (Marxist-Leninists), our duty is not to pass over in silence the revisionist and opportunist positions toward Chinese imperialism, as if they were simple “misunderstandings”; our duty is to unmask, denounce and fight them openly and implacably, demolishing the revisionist leaders ideologically, politically and morally.

Without conducting this principled struggle it is not possible to fight against capitalism, imperialism and social-imperialism.

The “market socialism” with Chinese characteristics has no revolutionary function, but functions to preserve the decrepit capitalist system and its incurable illnesses, the exploitation and oppression of the working class and the popular masses.

In its foreign policy as well its internal politics, China is not led by Marxism-Leninism and class and revolutionary conceptions, but by the logic of maximum profit, of the struggle for a new re-division of the world.

Thus, we have to consider the “China question” as a determining factor for the organizational unity of the sincere communists and vanguard elements of the proletariat, as we have always done regarding NATO and the EU.

To support one superpower in its struggle against another, to ally with China or another imperialism under the false flag of a “meeting of different cultures”, as the revisionists preach, defending the interests of “Chinese socialism” which has entirely degenerated into social-imperialism and social-chauvinism, is nothing else but treachery to the cause of the working class.

The phony “Italian communism”, instead of giving the proletariat an internationalist education in the struggle against imperialism, instead of pointing the working class to the road of unity in a worldwide anti-imperialist united front with the peoples and nations struggling for their social and national liberation, proposes international cooperation with one of the major imperialist powers, China, which is contributing to the economic and military preparation of a world war in order to contend with the USA for world predominance.

Against the positions of the revisionists and opportunists, we assert that the organizations of the workers’ and communist movement have to remain independent of the bourgeoisie, without be swallowed

up by one or another imperialist power, and must never support the Italian government and its hypocritical and reactionary policy.

The only possibility for our country to not fall from political and economic dependence on one imperialist power to another, is the ability of the proletarian forces to start and carry out a social revolution for a new and higher organization of society, for collective production on a social scale that allows the development of the productive forces at all levels.

Only with proletarian socialism will a foreign policy be possible based on the consolidation of friendship among the peoples, mutual assistance, fraternal collaboration and mutual advantage.

We support a policy of peace, of support for the struggle of the working class for its emancipation, for the struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations against imperialism and reaction.

We support a revolutionary policy based on the principle of proletarian internationalism, which we must always affirm!

December 2019

Post script: this article was written before the spread of the Covid 19 epidemic, which originated in China and quickly spread due to the carelessness and delays of Chinese revisionist leaders. The epidemic, which is having serious consequences at global level, initially complicated Italy-China relations. But the CPC, after putting the contagion under control, is trying to take advantage of the situation and the new opportunities it creates. The future of the "New Silk Road" will also depend on these developments.

March 2020

Mexico

Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist)

The Economic Crisis and the Coronavirus in Mexico

The economic crisis and the coronavirus pandemic, both in Mexico as well as at the international level, are two different developments of different origins, which coincided in time and place, both, but of course, like all the problems of human society, they interrelate and affect each other.

The Economic Crisis in Mexico

The characterization that we have maintained of the economic situation in Mexico in recent years, after the crisis of 2007-2009, has been one of economic stagnation, with short periods of weak growth, which never surpassed the levels of growth before 2008. Therefore, the Mexican economy did not reach a boom, permanently creating the tendency towards a new crisis.

The anti-cyclical measures that the governments of Felipe Calderón, Enrique Peña Nieto, and even Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) (in the last year), with their nuances, sought to counter the downward trend in the rate of profit, placing the costs of the crisis on the proletariat and the masses of people – increasing the exploitation of labor power seeking to increase the rate of surplus value.

To achieve this, the governments of Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto imposed in Mexico all the measures recommended by imperialism, through their international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These were the same neoliberal measure that were applied at the global level; this package of counter-cyclical measures were synthesized into structural reforms, the country's indebtedness and renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), now known as the Mexico-United States-Canada Treaty (USMCA Treaty).

The consequences of these measures can be summed up fundamentally in an exponential increase in the exploitation of labor power – with the loss of many of the rights won in the struggles of the work-

ing class since the Bourgeois Revolution of 1910-1917. They increase the absolute and relative surplus value, and a major effort to privatize basic services, such as health care and education.

This has also resulted in the handing over of more than 30% of the Mexican territory for mining exploitation by foreign capitalists, the devaluation of the Mexican peso by more than 50% (in 2011, \$1 US dollar was equivalent to around 11 Mexican pesos, in 2018 it was worth 21 pesos, today it is worth 25), and the doubling of public debt (in 2011 the country's public debt was equivalent to 24% of GDP, now it is equivalent to more than 47%). However, just in this period, the bankers and a handful of oligarchs of the country increased their capital exponentially; for example the magnate Carlos Slim was among the first four richest men in the world, where he still is, while more than 80% of the population remains below the limits of poverty and extreme poverty.

In the last 10 years, the above led to the intensification of the class struggle in the country, where the proletariat and the popular masses raised historical struggles. However, we did not achieve the level of revolutionary accumulation of forces to give it a revolutionary way out, nor did the oligarchy have enough strength to impose a fascist way out. In the elections of 2018, Department II of the bourgeoisie (production of articles of consumption – *translator's note*), through a populist discourse, with social democratic overtones, brought AMLO to the leadership of the Mexican government and State.

At that time, we pointed out: *“With the arrival of AMLO-MORENA, a new phase of the cycle of capitalist accumulation opens, one of the fundamental features of which, is that the fraction of the bourgeoisie linked to Department II, of the economy is being put in charge” (Conclusions, orientations, resolutions and tasks of the 7th Ordinary National Congress of the PCMML, November 2018).*

In the same document, we warned that a new discourse was being prepared with “new patriotic symbols”, such as the referendum in the current constitutional frameworks, the sale of the presidential plane, a cut in the salaries of top officials, and an “transparent” management of public resources. The fight ‘from above’ against corruption had begun, the official government residence was converted into a museum, among other measures.

In fact, at no time did they propose to dismantle the foundations of neoliberalism, which have been established in the country for the

last 40 years, much less to improve the conditions of the working class. On the contrary, the central objective of the so-called Fourth Transformation of López Obrador has been to modernize capitalism in Mexico, in order to guarantee the continuity of the process of capitalist accumulation for the benefit of big capital.

AMLO has sought the growth of the internal market; however, his government is pro-oligarchic, characterized by the revitalization of the national economy. It is the same as all the measures of the capitalist governments, from whichever faction, they are unable to avoid the crises. This is especially true when, in the case of Mexico, the structural reforms have remained intact; the public debt has not grown under AMLO because of the austerity policy that has been imposed; it has been paid on time.

The Mexican government promised a growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 4% during its six-year term. In the first year, a growth of about 2% was projected, and in any case, they claimed that a possible crisis could only be caused by external factors, specifically the weakness of the world economy. Our Party, in its First Ordinary National Conference of December 2019, analyzed the following data to argue that the tendency towards crisis in Mexico was largely rooted in the contradictions of capitalism in Mexico itself:

“What should be noted is that since the second quarter of 2018, the GDP has been declining, until the third quarter of 2019 to 0.0%.

“The data on the industrial sector, the decline in gross fixed capital investment, among other indicators, show that, in the short term, that is, the years 2019-2020, it would not be able to overcome the conditions that would allow it to move from a phase of stagnation to one of boom.

“Given the conditions of the world and Mexican economy, there is a better chance of a crisis developing. This would be to such an extent that the increase of tariffs on Mexico’s exports to the US, a coordinated flight of capital outside the country, a speculative attack of financial capital on the peso, the decline of foreign and local investment, among other economic factors, could trigger a crisis.

“Industrial production is central to understanding the state of capitalist accumulation. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), in the first quarter of 2019 the main features of industrial production (secondary activities) is the following: A contraction of -0.5% in the first quarter, -1.8% in the second quarter, -1.7% in the third quarter; if to this we add the con-

traction of the last quarter of 2018 from 1.1% to 0.5%, we can say that technically the secondary department in Mexico is in recession, according to the method of INEGI itself.

“Since industry is in recession, this is not only reflected in the whole economy, the main thing is that it shows the complications of the process of capitalist accumulation; to know the state of a capitalist economy, the way industry is remains the central thing. Therefore, the crisis that is growing in Mexico does not come from “abroad”, but is the contradiction of capitalism itself in Mexico.

‘On the other hand, the stagnation registered by the INEGI is reflected in employment and decrease of consumption. During March, only 48,515 formal jobs were created. The reality is that the 269,143 jobs created in the first quarter represent the lowest number of jobs created in the first three months of the year since 2014.

“In net terms (if we consider layoffs), for the third quarter of 2019 there was only an increase of 696,614 (formal) salaried jobs compared to the same quarter of 2018 (that is, an increase of 2.0%, less than the 2.4% obtained in the same period last year). The last data to point out the main features of the Mexican economy, apart from GDP and industrial production, is gross fixed investment.

“According to the report by the INEGI, Gross Fixed Investment registered a real decrease of –3.9% in March and –1.3% in September. This indicator represents expenditure on construction machinery and equipment, both domestic and foreign.

“In its cumulative annual comparison, Gross Fixed Investment was reduced by –5.5% in March and –6.5% in September. In particular the expenses of total machinery and equipment have fallen from –7.3% to –7.8% and in construction from –4.2% to –5.9% in the respective months.”

Now (the second half of March), the crisis has arrived both in Mexico and the world; they are trying to hide the real causes of the crisis, which are in the Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Decline, social production and private appropriation, wage exploitation, the accumulation of capital and the insatiable thirst for profit. These are all inherent in the imperialist-capitalist system itself; the state has intensified the propagation of the idea that the crisis has been caused by the economic war between China and the United States, the coronavirus and the fall of oil prices.

On March 19, Michelle Meyer, Bank of America’s Chief US economist pointed out that “the [US] economy has fallen into a

recession” and with this the crisis has started, and the economy of US imperialism will collapse in the second quarter of 2020, with a 12% decrease.

The destruction of the productive forces with this crisis will be brutal, Meyer continued, with more than 1 million jobs lost every month and “wealth will be destroyed”.

With this apocalyptic statement, it is inevitable that this new crisis that we are witnessing will have an international character and its fundamental feature, such as that of the most recent crises, is a crisis of overproduction. Both the so-called trade war between the United States and China, and the sharp drop in oil prices, have their cause in the overproduction of commodities.

The coronavirus pandemic only means that it is spreading at a time of crisis; the pandemic only aggravates it, and is very far from being one of the causes of the crisis.

In any case, the relationship of the Covid-19, which began in Wuhan, China, on December 31, 2019, with this new economic crisis is that, on the one hand, it has affected world trade to the extent that it has caused the closure of borders for people and commodities, both in China and in various parts of the world. As China is one of the important sources for five industrial branches (pharma-chemical, automotive, aeronautics, electronics and telecommunications), this has led to a significant decline in world trade. However, various monopolies of the different imperialist blocs have taken advantage of the health problem caused by Covid-19 to impose lockouts, to the detriment of the workers, in order to reduce the overproduction of commodities.

Mexico, arriving on the international stage with a stagnant economy and without even minimal growth, industrial production in de-



cline, and subjected economically to US imperialism, immediately suffered the blow. For more than 10 days up to March 20, the fall of the Mexican Stock Exchange reached more than 7.1%; in two weeks the Mexican peso was devalued by more than 30%, reaching a rate of one US dollar to 25 pesos, while 15 days before one US dollar was worth about 18 pesos. A barrel of Mexican oil fell by more than 22%, reaching \$18.78. This is naturally causing a shock to the Mexican economy.

The Current Anti-Crisis Measures Are Striking the Proletariat

In Mexico and globally, the anti-crisis measures are the same that imperialism has applied in previous crises, such as the credit line opened with the IMF, and advancing public investment spending with 150,000 million pesos to stabilize the budget, insurance to guarantee that in the face of the fall of oil prices the public budget will not be affected, the auctioning of the international dollar reserves, in addition to the fiscal stimuli for big national and transnational monopolies.

These measures are decided fundamentally by the oligarchy itself and imperialism, for example, immediately, on March 19, the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States offered a swap line to the Bank of Mexico and eight other countries, in order to avoid a shortage of US currency and at the same time to put these central banks into debt. The Business Coordinating Council, for its part, is preparing its fangs to benefit from the anti-crisis measures, proposing to the Mexican government the cancellation of taxes, the injection of liquid money to avoid the dismissal of workers, as well as the indebtedness of the Mexican government in order to face this crisis.

Taking advantage of the panic caused by the spread of the coronavirus, governments around the world have begun to impose fascist measures. These are for social control and to prevent popular uprisings because of the loss of millions of jobs, and imposing states of emergency to suspend the fundamental rights of the population. In addition, the state has suspended the labor rights of workers, imposing more enslaving labor on certain vital sectors of workers, for example in the health sector, or by legitimizing lockouts without pay for workers, etc.

There are important prospects for the working class and peoples

The economic crisis is provoking the deepening of all the contradictions inherent in the capitalist-imperialist system at the world level, but, in this particular crisis, unlike the one that struck us more than 10 years ago, the world proletariat is more active in its class struggle.

Recent events in Sudan, Iran, Haiti, Ecuador, Colombia and Chile show that the mass movement in the world is regaining ground.

Even though the working class has not been the main force and leader of the recent movements, the International Labor Organization (ILO) is already estimating that, with the current crisis, it is possible to lose approximately 25 million jobs, which will necessarily force the working class to stand up in battle.

In Mexico, after the ebb in the mass struggle that began in the second half of 2018, the first quarter of this year saw a revival of the mass movement, on March 8, with hundreds of thousands of women taking to the streets, the outbreak of some university strikes (Autonomous University "Benito Juárez" of Oaxaca, Autonomous University of Chapingo), the strike of the Single Union of Workers of NOTIMEX (state news agency), and the teachers' mobilizations. The struggles of the peoples for the defense of natural resources in the southeast of the country are, among others, the elements that shape this perspective.

The financial oligarchy and its most fascist and bloodthirsty manifestations are licking their lips in order to impose a fascist solution: the mass destruction of the productive forces and a new redivision of the world through a Third World War. The measures imposed by border closures, curfews and states of emergency in many parts of the world, under the pretext of the coronavirus, are erasing at one stroke all the rights won by the struggle and blood of the working class. They are arguing for a state of emergency, which is being magnified and/or provoked in many cases. Their main purpose is to advance the putting down of the protests and the legitimization of fascism.

In Mexico, since the coming of AMLO to power, these same sectors, the fascists and the ultra-reactionary right, have reactivated all their mechanisms to seek roots among the masses. They are constantly seeking to snatch away the historic banners of struggle of the proletariat and the masses of people. They are not yet taking the lead within the mass movement, but the crisis we are entering will also create conditions for them to step up their fight for the masses.

We, the working class and the popular masses, must be clear that there are still varying solutions to this crisis, but the main ones are: on the one hand, the fascist solution, with a world war, and this is the best solution for the benefit of the international financial oligarchy; and the revolutionary solution that, with the intensification of the economic crisis that will lead to political crises and possibly revolutionary crises, in which the proletariat must take the initiative and unite all the popular sectors around itself, opening the way to the proletarian revolution.

From this perspective, it follows that the path of the working class necessarily involves intensifying its efforts to advance as quickly as possible in its processes of revolutionary accumulation of forces. This places as a current and immediate problem, the building of the Anti-Fascist and Anti-Imperialist United Front, raising the slogan “Let the rich pay for the crisis!”, taking up as forms of struggle the General Political Strikes, advancing towards a new offensive, opening the way to a new epoch of proletarian revolutions.

This process, in Mexico, is in the building of the National Assembly of the Proletariat and Peoples of Mexico, the centralization of the struggles of the whole country, under a single plan of struggle, and the revival of the mass struggles, unmasking on the one hand the oligarchic nature of the AMLO government, but also denouncing the fascist and ultra-reactionary right, which pretends to stand in opposition to AMLO, with whom it has differentiated positions, but both share the bourgeois pro-oligarchic nature.

The crisis has arrived and all the contradictions inherent in the capitalist-imperialist system will deepen. The class struggle will intensify exponentially; the proletariat has no other way but to resume its leading role in conducting its class struggle.

We Marxist-Leninist communists, revolutionaries, democrats from all over the world have to play our historical role to help raise again the perspective of scientific socialism and communism. Now more than ever... It is time for Proletarian Revolution! Workers of the World, Unite!

March 2020

Morocco

Democratic Way

El Titi el Habib and Mohamed Ben Taher

For a broad dialogue among Marxist militants, as a necessary step on the road to building the party of the Moroccan working class

1. Theoretical preamble

When Marxists engage in dialogue, they do so for change, not just for interpretation or understanding. In order for the dialogue among Marxists to set this goal, one must have as an orientation an essential question if answered, the practice will have progressed and they will have obtained tangible results in achieving the desired revolutionary change.

We must start from the fact that this dialogue is built on a material basis and is the result of the historical experience of the Marxist left in Morocco and throughout the world. This observation consists in the fact that the Marxist movement was able to answer two essential questions: a response which we consider as allowing the construction and planning of the future starting from the present. The two questions were those raised by the world communist movement since its creation by the great theoreticians Marx and Engels. The contribution was added to by the practical and healthy formulation of Lenin, the third proletarian teacher armed with Marxism and engaged in the accomplishment of the tasks of the socialist revolution.

The first question was whether the socialist revolution is on the agenda of the proletariat in all countries or whether its objective conditions have not yet been met?

The answer came from the founding teachings with foresight and without ambiguity or hesitation. This included the response in a document that has become one of the most important works of the world communist movement and is the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. It is the first proletarian program emerging to accomplish the revolution and to take power after defeating the bourgeoisie. This was confirmed by the revolution of the Paris Commune, as the first experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In carrying out the tasks of the revolution, and in response to the above question, the communist movement has had multiple experiences with a diversity of contexts, realities of social structures and historical accumulations of the working class in all parts of the capitalist world. These experiences were subject to an objective evaluation and there were many lessons that Lenin formulated and have converged on the fundamental question for which the answers were a motor to take qualitative and giant steps in history of the world communist movement. The question was actually made up of two parts: where to begin? And what is to be done?

The reasons which justified these questions were linked to the demands of the struggle for the social democratic movement which had just emerged in a society coming from feudal society joining the ranks of the capitalist states that is Russia. Lenin, accompanied by a handful of activists, answered this complex question. The answer was able to put the Communist Manifesto to the test and reality with a creative methodology taking into account the nature of Russian society and the emergence of a stage in which capitalism went from its competitive stage to the stage of monopoly and the domination of finance capital, that is to say to the stage of imperialism and the division of the world. The response generated a new type of communist movement, the components of which were built by a new type of communist parties, those aligned with the Leninist conception of their structure and program based on the realization of the socialist revolution, and its construction in one country or in a few countries on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a new democracy at the service of the workers and its strategic allies, the peasants and all the laboring classes.

Today, the characteristic of the general situation is the aggravation of the crisis of the capitalist system. It sinks capitalism into its march towards its decadence and its fall, and with it the ruin of the environment, the earth and the destruction of the future of humanity.

Thus, globalized capitalism dominated by finance is experiencing a crisis whose extent can be compared to that of the two great crises of 1870 and 1929. This crisis can be explained by three series of internal contradictions which are the origin of deep dysfunctions of the contemporary economic system.

First, there is a growing divorce between the globalized economic space and the political space, which remains limited to the territory of the nation state. Globalized capitalism would need new forms of

regulation and governance that the main international organizations have failed to bring about. Created in the aftermath of the Second World War, and dominated by the first industrialized countries, these organizations have failed to adapt to the new geopolitical configuration created by the rise of the emerging countries, in particular the B.R.I.C.S. (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

Excess role of finance capital is the second source of vulnerability for contemporary capitalism. The exorbitant role played by the financial markets is the source of recurrent instability, as shown by the multiplication of financial crises since the beginnings of financial globalization in the last quarter of the 20th century (the impacts of the coronavirus crisis is only one of the visible symptoms). In addition, the domination of financial players, foremost among them the shareholders, has led to a distortion of the sharing of income and wealth, which has become increasingly unequal. The relative impoverishment of the middle classes in the advanced countries has greatly contributed to the over-indebtedness of households, which is at the origin of the international financial crisis which began in the United States in 2007. Finance capital has thus intensified inequalities and instability, which are the two great plagues.

Consequently, the socialist revolution has become inevitable, like the specter prophesied by Marx and Engels, in order to save humanity from the dark destiny that capitalism has for it. To achieve this revolution, the Marxist-Leninist militants find themselves forced to answer the following central question: how to move forward? They ask this question while recalling the historical and theoretical responses and the achievements of the world proletariat through the three pioneering experiences, despite the limits of their achievements and their relative failures: the Revolution of the Paris Commune, the Bolshevik Revolution and the Chinese Revolution

To answer this question, there must be a minimum of materialist structure (the structural time according to Mahdi Amel) and ideological structure (the time of intellectual production according to Marx) and of the political and ideological line. The question is for activists involved in the militant working class movement in their positions. Without these principles, discussion or dialogue will be separated from reality; it will be a contemplative, interested theory whose results are hypothetical.

To deepen this dialogue in order to answer the question: how to move forward?, it is necessary to clarify the theoretical orientation,

which directs the process of progress and the movement in struggle, then we will review what will be the syntheses of the dialogue.

2. In response to a question: how to move forward?

Here, we approach the theory of contradiction and the question of the priority of the contradictions, then we define this priority in the list as we see it, and whose answer is considered to be at the heart of political and ideological orientation within world communist movement today on the one hand; and on the other hand, in the light of these answers, we will approach the current state of the social movement and the problems of the fronts and demands which create the conditions for the self-transformation of the objective political crisis into a revolutionary crisis in the Leninist sense.

First: the theory of contradiction and the question of the priority of the contradictions, then the matrix of basic contradictions:

Before detailing the nature of the contradictions, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of the concept of contradiction¹.

This concept occupies a fundamental position in our practical life as activists involved in the process of societal change according to what we understand of the laws of class struggle that are unfolding before our eyes. When we examine the contradiction carried by the class struggle, we perceive a paradox happening in the case of the distinction between the abstract theoretical concept of contradiction and its embodiment in reality; it is transformed from abstract theoretic-

¹ We do not want to repeat here all that has been written and said, but we would like to focus on a fundamental question in the question of contradiction. We consider the contradiction from the point of view of Marxist theory as a vision of the universe and of society and not only of contemplation, but of the theory of praxis, that is, the theory of changing the world. This theory maintains that the concept of contradiction occupies the position of the motor or the position of the axis around which the rest of the concepts and laws revolve or are formed; this is one of the laws of dialectics, if not their essence. Consciousness belongs to the instructor, this is materialism, but when you see the primacy of consciousness over matter, you belong to the idealist school, and there is no third position or one in between. Of course, in each school there is a range of doctrines and schools of thought. With such strength and inclusiveness, even science is determined by its contradictory nature, including humanity, economics, history, meetings, politics, etc.

cal perceptions to its proof in the complexity of reality. In this comparison with reality, it becomes a realistic concept immersed in specificities, and it is constructed by a jumble of heavy battles which almost hide the features of its face, and it is difficult to recognize its nature and to diagnose its veracity. In its amalgamation with the rest of the contradiction emerging in the arena of the class struggle, the spirit is in torment and in a metaphorical wandering like those of cats that wander at night: they are all black.

It gets worse when these contradictions are considered static, do not change and are not affected by the impact of history. This explains the turmoil and the inability to determine the nature of these contradictions and then one has the difficulty of providing mechanical evaluations devoid of dialectical meaning – to resolve them because all the typologies of contradictions are amalgamated into spaghetti, the one in the others; it is therefore difficult to deconstruct and organize them.

What is the most effective and surest way to diagnose scientific contradiction and not fall into the trap of the mechanical method of dealing with contradictions?

In our opinion, one of the most effective methods is that of organized work and collective thinking. When we look collectively at the contradictions and their effects on reality, our vision is vigilant and capable of better grasping this reality of the contradictions, and one's attention is paid to the complexity of the situation, in particular when it is exposed in its movement and its dynamism and not frozen with-



out movement. One of the advantages of this collective work which seeks to make the ideas mature through organized debate is that it leads to deducing the action from these contradictions and how to resolve them, and therefore to fixing practical action using the principles of democratic centralism, as a principle of solving problems. By this, we endow ourselves with the greatest guarantees of obtaining a more effective and rewarding plan than that fixed by a single person. This is why it is always preferable for us when possible to have organized teamwork.

To corroborate this organized and structuring collective reflection, and to provide it with elements of knowledge and theories, I would like to present some ideas on the question of contradiction as I see it in our practice of struggle.

All the theoretical research that has been conducted on the question of contradiction confirms that this concept, in addition to being a global concept for all aspects of life and of our world, is also of a special nature in its content and in its multiple forms. In this presentation we distinguish three types of contradictions:

- the fundamental contradiction,
- the principal contradiction
- the secondary contradiction.

If the fundamental contradiction determines the nature of the social or universal phenomenon, then the principal contradiction determines the nature of the dynamism or the dynamics of the struggle defined by the phenomenon which was based on the fundamental contradiction and by the dynamics of the conflict. The solution to this major contradiction allows one to progress in the resolution of the fundamental contradiction - by quantitative accumulations or even with a qualitative leap – and on the other hand, it occurs at certain times and in precise circumstances that the principal contradiction turns into primary or secondary contradiction. As for the secondary contradiction, it belongs by its nature to the category of major contradictions with the difference that in terms of intensity or preponderance, it is more nuanced and less important. However, this contradiction can go from the secondary stage to the stage of major contradiction.

Tell me how the organization deals with defining the nature and prioritizing of contradictions? I will tell you if this is a scientific approach and what is its identity.

When evaluating or judging a political organization, and if this organization deserves the name of an organization that operates in a scientific manner, it suffices to examine how it deals with contradictions. The area in which this method of dealing with contradictions is revealed is its ideological or intellectual reference and its political line. Ideological references allow us to define the contradictions, while the political line often shows the interdependence of these contradictions and the method to resolve the fundamental and the principal ones through strategy, while the tactic develops a plan to manage the contradictions and organize them in the short term, and it notes the need to preserve one's orientation so that the organization does not depart from strategic challenges and priorities.

In addition to evaluating the functioning of the organization, whether it is scientific or not, the treatment of inconsistencies in the line of any organization also makes it possible to check out the true identity of this organization and to which political school it really belongs, and not its pretensions. This check up is of the utmost importance to us in Morocco, especially at this time when the question of the unity of organizations with the same orientation is raised in order to build the independent party of the working class. This monitoring facilitates the process of reconciliation and can dissolve some of the non-essential differences that exist for historical reasons or from accumulations of individual experiences. On the other hand, it is permissible to define the criteria for the fundamental differences which occur with other currents, and this will of course make the task of discussion and research on these points fruitful and effective in bringing together the differentiating tectonics and searching for plans of work on the articulation and the points of disagreement.

Before going over our opinion on the nature of the contradictions, we must refer to the situation in which the international Marxist movement finds itself today. This situation is the result of a historical process that this movement has known since its creation.

In the era of the founding leaders, two contradictory tendencies emerged, each one dealing with how to resolve the fundamental contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The revolutionary tendency chose the path of the proletariat that is revolting in order to wrest power and establish a socialist society, while the revisionist tendency considered that the transition to socialism would be peaceful and gradual thanks to quantitative accumulations, so that

workers' power would replace the power of the bourgeois through elections.

Within each of these two trends, differences and tendencies have emerged. In the midst of the revolutionary tendency, when the experiment was launched towards the accomplishment of the proletarian revolution, and after the establishment of the first socialist experience and in the face of the evolution of the class struggle and the struggles of the peoples for independence and liberation, divergences appeared as to the determination of the nature of the contradictions or the question of their prioritization. There were differences on how to resolve the fundamental contradiction in socialist society and on the contradiction with imperialism. Through the responses elaborated, three main tendencies appeared, namely the Marxist-Leninist tendencies and the Trotskyist tendency, in addition to the revisionist branch which was reinforced in its positions within the international Marxist movement, whether in the socialist system or in the rest of the countries, in particular the Eurocommunists after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.

After the collapse of the Soviet experience and after the blows received by all revolutionary tendencies within the world Marxist movement, a period of hesitation and confusion prevailed, leading to the emergence of currents all claiming to possess the truth and criticizing those who do not share their opinion or beliefs. What is aggravated by the fragmentation is the dominance of dogmatism and the absence of dealing with ideas and the appearance of leaders who were considered sacred and infallible, with their excess of reverence for texts and considering reference as sacred text regardless of its content. They made the speeches of leaders a sacred text even if it was a letter or an article dealing with a temporary problem or a trivial question that ended a long time ago. Such behavior with the authorities and leaders finds its deep reason in the distancing of these defenders from the problems of the class struggle in which they live. They include applying fundamental texts in a different context. These practices are no different from those which Marx and Engels fought against, and which Lenin fiercely resisted.

We call for a new discussion of the foundations of this phenomenon, a re-examination of Marxist theory and stripping them of these excessive impurities. For this task to succeed, it is necessary to establish a permanent criterion allowing one to reconsider an objective process of sorting out the tendencies and the schools and to avoid this

odious mode which prevails today in the division becoming pathological under any pretext or reason for declaration of division and difference. This fragmentation reflects an inherent need in the petty bourgeois, fleeing the responsibility for the struggle and investing in commitments by which they abandon their bourgeois mind sets and join the ranks of the proletariat with firm conviction by transforming themselves into simple soldiers in its ranks. It is the petty-bourgeois nature motivated by impulse for the sake of appearance and leadership, and therefore it dies by exhausting itself in the search for justifications and excuses, and it fights wars under shiny slogans using those stolen from proletarian ideals to manipulate them against everyone.

In the question of objective and real sorting out between tendencies, the notion of contradictions plays a fundamental role in terms of determining their nature and in terms of arrangement and methods to deal with them. This is why we propose to present a set of fundamental contradictions as they appear at the current stage of the development of class and international conflicts.

After capitalism triumphed in Western Europe and the peoples moved from feudal societies to capitalist society, where the capitalist mode of production is developed and reached a high degree of concentration, it sought with the greatest breadth to make a profit and carry off as much wealth as possible. In the course of its history, capitalism has gone through several stages of development to reach the highest levels, that is the imperialist stage, which is the stage of the decay of the capitalist system, and because of this evolution, the almost total control over all the peoples imbued with the effect of direct and indirect colonialism. This is how these subject countries went from societies which knew pre-capitalist models of production to societies in which the capitalist mode of dependency prevailed. At this stage of the development of capitalism, the conditions for the aggravation and explosion of contradictions have matured, which led to the first experience of the power of the proletariat in Russia after the overthrow of capitalism and the beginning of the construction of socialism in one country in 1917.

Today's developments confirm the continuing decay of capitalism, but reveal one of the most dangerous contradictions, which is the danger of eliminating life on our planet, if imperialism is left free to achieve its brutal goals.

As for Morocco and in the context of external and internal developments, we can summarize the most important characteristics of social formation in the following areas:

- The history of Morocco was at its various stages marked by the collision of two different choices: the first is the desire to seek the strengthening of the proper legal identity of the tribes individually or collectively, in order to protect their interests and their development and to refuse to submit to the tutelage of an external power of one or another central authority, and all their exploitation, contempt and forced labor. On the other hand, the Makhzen [Arabic name for the State in Morocco. In reality it refers to the oligarchy] and its clique, with its appetite for dominating and acquiring the most beautiful land, pastures and sources of water.
- One of the results of the colonial intervention was put an end to the subjective dynamism of the development of tribal society. Thus, the historic opportunity to mature the social transformations necessary for the transition towards this tribal society on the basis of the pre-capitalist production model has been carried out at a new stage in society. Thus, the colonial intervention had a decisive effect by blocking the natural growth of Moroccan social formation. And that changed the course.
- Colonialism used the Makhzen to penetrate into Moroccan society and affected all aspects of economic, social, political and cultural life. The new state was formed as the political authority of a bloc of classes made up of the comprador bourgeoisie and the big landowners, who seized the surplus value plundered from the working class and all natural resources, and on the other hand the different vulnerable and marginalized social classes were either exploited or left behind.

These are the characteristics of the social formation of our country and they do not differ fundamentally from the reality of other colonized or semi-colonized countries; which have waged a relentless struggle for liberation. But due to imperialist domination, none of these countries was able to make the transition to the stage of social progress, as happened in the countries of the center or exceptionally in Japan. All attempts by the local bourgeoisie have failed, and even their volatile nature and fear of the revolutions of their people has made them a bourgeoisie dependent on and partner of imperialism. The practical result of this situation has been the supremacy of a hy-

brid model of production under which these countries have remained at the lowest levels of material and cultural backwardness. The process of completing the tasks of liberation and construction of the national economy has passed from the tasks of the class that is revolutionary to the end, that is the working class.

In the light of these data on social formation in our country, we can present our analysis or concrete identification of the fundamental contradictions through which the process of accomplishing the tasks of emancipation and of economic, social and political progress in our country will be achieved, namely national liberation, democratic construction and the construction of a socialist society, and these tasks are not stages that are temporarily separate or isolated; they are rather closely linked and dialectically interdependent. The necessity of the leadership of the working class for this struggle demands that its ultimate objective is to realize the socialist project on the way to the construction of a communist society (see the political reference for the democratic approach).

+ In the fundamental contradiction that exists between the labor power which produces surplus value and capital which exploits the labor force.

It is the fundamental contradiction of the "motive force of motive forces" as formulated by the thesis of the fourth national congress, and it is this contradiction between the labor force which produces surplus value and capital which exploits the labor force. Capitalist society was based on the production of commodities on a very large scale and is constantly expanding with a view to earning profits. Since the 16th century, the capitalist mode of production began to develop in Western Europe, from the simple cooperative to manufacturing. With the Industrial Revolution, it used simple and sophisticated machines, manufacturing was transformed into factories and then into large industrial complexes. The elimination of bondage of serfdom and the liberation of the rural labor force made it possible to make available a labor force far from its lands and deprived of any useful tool of production. Thus, the majority of the population was transformed into an army that had only its hands, against a minority that owns the means of production and all the wealth extracted from the process of social production. The majority, formed of a proletariat and a semi-proletariat, can only live by selling its labor power, which is at the same time the source of the wealth of the upper social classes.

It is this fundamental paradox, or "motor of motors", which penetrates all capitalist societies of the countries of the center or the countries of the periphery, the societies of dependent capitalism.

In order to find a solution to this fundamental contradiction, the Marxist-Leninist movement has developed throughout its history the theory of the transition through the stage of national democratic revolution, which is the stage of the realization of the new state based on the resolution to the principal contradiction and which, without its solution, will not open the way to the construction of socialist society, and this principal contradiction is what exists between the popular classes as a whole, the working class, the poor and landless peasants, the workers in popular neighborhoods, the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie on the one hand and imperialism, in particular French imperialism, the Makhzenian system and its social base. The problem comes from the bloc of the ruling class and its societal extensions of parties and notables on the other hand. Consequently, the revolutionary strategy is to resolve this major contradiction under the leadership of the future Popular Class Front to resolve the fundamental contradiction under the leadership of the party of the working class and all the working classes (see theses of the fourth national congress).

Before continuing to review the rest of the fundamental contradictions seen by Marxist-Leninists, it is necessary to emphasize the fundamental differences between Marxist-Leninists and the Trotskyist currents regarding the problem of resolving this fundamental contradiction. They agree that the solution to this contradiction goes through the socialist revolution, but they refuse to speak of the stage of the national popular democratic revolution, which they consider a revisionist proposition and state that Lenin had abandoned his thesis on the national democratic revolution and adopted Trotsky's thesis on the permanent revolution, including Trotsky's point of view on the current dictatorship of the proletariat without the alliance with the peasantry.

+ In the fundamental contradiction linked to the contradiction between the workers and the capitalists.

The basis and reason for the private property of the capitalists and the large landowners is to transform labor into a commodity and, by extension, to convert workers into paid slaves. One of the characteristics of the capitalist mode of production is to make production and labor a social process. The transformation of ownership of the means of production into joint ownership will allow the relations of

production to correspond to the social nature of the productive forces. Thus, when private ownership of the means of production is eliminated and transformed into the common property of society, the condition for the liberation of the workers themselves will be fulfilled and the fundamental contradiction between the workers and the capitalists will be resolved when the ownership of the means of production will be transferred to the property of the society as a whole and the exploitation of one person by another will be eliminated.

+ The fundamental contradiction that exists between the oppressed peoples and imperialist countries

When the bourgeoisie extended its trade to the most remote regions of the world, it sought new markets and sources of raw materials. Through its establishment of the world capitalist market, it helped to subject all countries to the chain of capitalist production, which allowed them to broaden the process of exploitation. Thus began the scene of colonialism and dividing the world into spheres of influence. In all these countries, the different existing modes of production were subject to the control and force of the imposed mode of production, the capitalist mode of production, from which these peoples were subjected to the control of a handful of proxy bourgeoisies. To put an end to this direct control, wars of liberation were waged and colonialism impelled certain countries to gain an independence which was essentially formal, thanks to which these countries remained under the influence of imperialist societies and institutions. The era of imperialism is the era of the fundamental contradiction between the subjugated peoples and nations on the one hand, and the oppressed and imperialist on the other hand.

This contradiction is resolved by solving the principal contradiction represented by the victory or defeat of the local class forces which are the representatives on the national level of imperialism and its interests and institutions, or by resolving it through of the Alliance of Free Peoples, establishing relations of alliance and cooperation between them and progressing in the construction of a system of socialist countries.

+ The fundamental contradiction that exists between socialism and capitalism.

The development of the productive forces and their transformation into a social nature and their entry into contradiction with the form of private ownership of the means of production is what constitutes the gravedigger of capitalism analyzed by Marx and Engels after

their publication of the *Communist Manifesto*. With the emergence of the stage of imperialism and as Lenin demonstrated, the task of the transition to socialism became important in the agenda of the proletariat, which the proletariat of Paris tried in the Paris Commune for 4 months, and the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 which lasted more than 70 years. Therefore, we consider that this fundamental contradiction has become a reality today and the possibility of its solution is also the task of the proletariat wherever it is found: in the countries of the center of the task being the elimination of the power of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the power of the workers and the transition to socialism, and in the countries of the periphery, it is imperative to complete the task of establishing a national democratic and popular state on the path of building socialism. It is the task of the proletariat and its allies in one country or in a limited group of countries, enriched by the failure of past experiences.

At present, the question of the construction of socialism has become a reality because the world proletariat has had a historical and practical experience, as has the process of construction of proletarian parties and organizations which have joined the struggle to achieve the revolution. But the reality of these parties and organizations is the fragmentation and poor coordination among them. Therefore, in order to resolve this fundamental contradiction, one must build a Marxist International which strives to accomplish the task of the socialist revolution and to provide all the means to defeat imperialism and capitalism wherever they are.

+ The fundamental contradiction between capital and the environment.

In his analysis of capital, Marx revealed that the limitless tendency which distinguishes it, which is its constant search for more profit and expansion; it does not stop at a limit or an obstacle, otherwise it loses its soul which is the characteristic that makes it Capital. In its unrestrained quest, this requires the exhaustion of all the raw material reserves which abound in the earth, and the consumption of nonrenewable energy resources, in total disrespect for the environment, violating the need to preserve and protect the sources of life; taking such measures constitutes obstacles but more so an additional cost limiting the profits and profitability that Capitalism does not want to bear. With each structural crisis, capitalism rushes to intensify the exploitation of the natural resources and plunges the people into poverty; this constitutes additional reasons to resort to behaviors harmful

to nature and the environment in general. Capitalism in its search for profit has become an enemy of nature and is leading humanity to its death. This is a fundamental contradiction which will only be resolved by eliminating the capitalist mode of production which, because of its greed and brutality, puts two options before everyone: either to eliminate it as capital or to put an end to life on planet Earth. On the other hand, as Marx pointed out, the work or the whole process of production takes place within the limits of nature. Consequently, socialism, in turn, is necessary to ensure that the process of production takes place in a way that respects nature, and for this reason socialism is the friend that protects nature.

The identification of the contradiction between capital and the environment as a fundamental contradiction states, on the one hand, that capitalism at its imperialist stage leads humanity to annihilation, and on the other hand, stressing that if the process of production takes place in nature, then this process of becoming a friend of nature must take place within the framework of new relations, controlled by people freed from want, the people of socialist society. It is the framework in which this fundamental contradiction can be resolved, contrary to what some believe, that socialism and capitalism are of the same type, and that they thus threaten the environment and life on our planet; just as the solution we have discussed is fundamentally incompatible with what some liberal technocrats and thinkers think when they try to rationalize production and exploitation, and it is enough to rationalize practices to keep things simple and for humanity to transcend the danger to the environment.

These are the fundamental contradictions that we see governing our world today. In the manner of its development and treatment, the identity of the Marxist organizations is clarified and its political and reference affiliations are circulated. We are very hopeful to organize the discussion and dialogue on the identification of these contradictions and the means of remedying them by presenting a conception of the principal and secondary contradictions linked to each of these fundamental contradictions. We also hope to provide a healthy and objective atmosphere to achieve formidable stages in the process of unification of the Marxist currents which agree on these determinations. To openly present the conflict with other currents which do not adopt the same limits. To make the debate clear and easy, we call for dedicating our energy into the methodology for identifying the contradictions, prioritizing them, their plans and methods to resolve

them, including them in an ideological reference and a political line in its strategic and tactical aspects.

Second: the current status of the social movement, the major problems and the question of the independent party of the working class.

1. Forms and content of the mass and class struggle and their separation.

With the movement of February 20, the mass struggle in our country passed to a new stage of its development, which requires a new analysis, new references and development of the tools and methodology of analysis.

The continuation of the same program is no longer able to understand the variables nor to devise methods of struggle and change. This is due to the growing emergence of new forms of protest based on marches, uprisings and pauses in which multiple social movements are stratified, class or professional, while the classic forms such as strikes or sit-ins under the leadership of trade unions, parties or professional associations have been absent or have relatively disappeared.

This is a new situation in our country, how to deal with it? But before that, we must answer the question: is the state of our country isolated or is it a known phenomenon, how did it happen and what are the causes? How did it spread among us and why exactly at this time or under these circumstances?

These social movements are not specific to our country, nor to this moment. This is why we find many writings and theoreticians specializing in these social movements. It will be useful to study this diverse intellectual output, as this will help to understand the practical uses of social protest movements.

In order to contribute to this debate which is taking place today, we think that we could start from certain basic concepts which are popular and which occupy a large place among certain theoreticians and activists of the social movements, such as: spontaneous – non-class – non-political – non-ideological.

There is neither time nor space to review all the stages of the social movements. and we will therefore focus on their current reality. What distinguishes the new form of these social movements is that they mix social movements which have undergone a process of or-

ganization and management by the political or union forces and the social movements which have not followed from a previous action but which rather started spontaneously. Suddenly, some consider them spontaneous. In the current situation, we note and confirm that the dominant factor is the latter type of social movement.

To explain this situation, it is necessary to identify two main reasons: that the organized party and union forces are in a period of strong ebb and unprecedented retreat, but certain components have disappeared or merged into the current political system and became supporters of the Makhzen and its authority. The second reason is the retreat of progressive thought and at the heart of it anti-imperialist communist thought, favorable to the emancipation of the peoples. Today it is rising from the ashes, but the effect and the accumulation of temporary defeats and the collapse of the socialist experience had a profound impact on the progressive forces and allowed retrograde currents or distinct identities to occupy the arena, and the states, the imperialist institutions and the reactionary regimes of the region helped them. This reality has had an impact on the political action of these forces and their reduced influence, and they did not succeed in framing the social movements, and even if they were implied in some of them, they do it while aspiring to remedy what happened or to revive their structures as parties or unions. This pushes them to try to take advantage of these social movements, which gives credibility to those who accuse them of taking advantage of them.

For this, we see the resumption of social movements which spontaneously break out and turn into a protest movement which takes a variety of forms of struggle and organization, raises many global or limited demands and is often without central leadership. In order to limit the scope, it will be useful to address the most important features of the popular protests that have taken place since 2013 after the decline of the February 20 movement.

The first observation or data to pay attention to is that economic, social and political conditions have deteriorated to a large extent, which has shown that the system has become incapable of meeting the broad expectations of the masses. This means that the perspectives are closed and that all aspects of the crisis are due to the lack of work and the precariousness of what is available. There is a feeling of mistrust and marginalization among young people of all classes, graduates or holders of higher degrees. Unemployment has become a plague which has struck the overwhelming majority of families,

whatever their origin, both of the middle bourgeoisie and the workers. Together with this dilemma, the dilemma of poverty has appeared and eroded the purchasing power of all the popular classes due to the high costs – basic consumer goods and services handed over to the private sector; and due to the bankruptcy of social services and infrastructure, such as health care and education, which have exhausted the spending capacities of the people following the withdrawal of the state and public sector which have abandoned their duties and obligations and have conceded it or opened it up to the private sector.

In this context and these conditions, protest movements have broken out, letting citizens express their dissatisfaction and their rejection of poverty and misery. It is important for us here at this point to distinguish between these protest movements and to observe the following statement: It will be impossible to analyze all of these protest movements as they are very numerous, so that the Ministry of the Interior provides fairly eloquent figures on the concerned social movements and for political aims, and of course it does so in order to make a political discourse extolling freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and demonstration, in order to justify its prohibition of certain specific protest movements. Despite this large number, one can distinguish two main types:

The first concerns movements that have broken out due to a specific cause through which the masses concerned have been affected by a limited problem; these have been banned or obtained promises (often broken) to put an end to them. This is the case of protest in a popular district, among a social group with degraded social conditions or to a protest movement in a region such as Zagora, etc.

The second is that of protest movements that can transform themselves into social movements. They can concern a village, a city, a region or a vast region. But what are the ingredients for protest movements to become a social movement? We ask this question to take advantage of the experiences of other peoples and not waste time in rediscovering the laws and social relations as well as the experiences of other peoples and so that we can also take advantage of their achievements and start to bring a rational contribution to these achievements. Next, it is the most important way in which we help convert protest movements into social movements and what they are. The functional elements required for this are provided, and here is a minimum of organizational factor, whatever its form, background or source.

+ In the analysis of the social movement:

The scientific reading of the history of social movements has not been established independently of the conflicts taking place in human societies and can never be separated from them as long as these movements originally point to a conflict which signifies each conflict between individuals and groups in terms of values and interests, because conflict is one of the dimensions of the social movement in its form of protest based on rejection and the search for change.

Blumer emphasizes that the social movement is a collective effort aimed at changing the character of stable social relations in a particular society. Social movements are, according to him, collective projects aimed at establishing a new way of living, and are based on a feeling of dissatisfaction with the dominant model, the desire to establish a new model "and the desire to establish a new model is the founding condition of any social movement that remains associated with continuous change."

As a transformation over time, it is attached in a way that is not transitory in the structure and process of the social system, to find out what modifies or changes the course of its history.

Besides the obsession with change, another element that is no less important than the previous one is present in the definition of a social movement, which is precisely the element of continuity. The sociology dictionary of Gould and Culp confirms that these are the continuous efforts of a social group aimed at achieving common goals for all its members, so continuous action is what qualifies the practice of protest to belong conceptually to the social movement as an organized and non-transitory effort, in which reality is ignored and another is based on it. For this, François Chazel² stated that the social movement is a "collective act of protest aiming to adopt changes in the social or political environment", because it is linked to "organized efforts deployed by a certain number of people to change or resist change in the society".

The social movement presupposes a certain degree of organization in order to achieve the objective of change and transcendence, and this is what Guy Rocher³ recommends, stressing that "it is a structured and specific organization, with a public objective which

² Chazel, F. (2003). From power to challenge. Paris, LGDJ

³ Guy Rocher – Introduction to general sociology, Montreal (Quebec), Canada, Éditions H.M.H., 1968-1969

consists in bringing together individuals to defend specific issues” and this leads to recognize once again the delicacy of the positive issue and generator of the social movement: Each movement works for a specific cause, and it mainly protests for that cause. From this, one can conclude that the social movement does not acquire its structure and meaning apart from a minimum level of organization and clarity of the objectives and the condition of the question, and before the existence of a group framed by values and criteria around which a certain consensus is reached.

The definition of a social movement raises many differences, depending on the multiplicity of theoretical and methodological approaches and premises, but the difference does not seem to apply as to the definition of its potential characteristics, despite the overall discussion that has been raised about creation of a unified and clear concept of the social movement. Most definitions confirm that the question is linked to collective efforts aimed at individuals with specific objectives that they seek to achieve with a collective approach, and that the question also concerns the existence of socially acceptable standards and it is possible to achieve a kind of consensus in this regard in the form of solidarity, absolute support or relative sympathy.

Social movements are also characterized, for the most part, by a conscious organization of members, on the grounds that change presupposes a certain degree of awareness of needs and demands, in addition to the existence of a minimum level of organization as a distinct characteristic of the social movement. The difficulties presented by the definition somewhat justify the widening of the circles of debate based on the consciousness that has been raised about social movements since the middle of the 20th century, and the fact that the attention of researchers in different sciences has tended to analyze the individuals and groups that manifest themselves and demand change, in the form of demonstrations, uprisings and a movement of rebellion.

Each social movement requires a minimum level of organization, with the resulting mechanisms and rules of behavior, management and expression, which are the fundamental determinants of the infrastructure for protest action. Likewise, we can never imagine a social movement without a discourse oriented towards the idea of protest, which discourse expresses the superstructure of the social movement, when money can be considered as a key question in the study of these

movements, as is indicated by reflecting on the building and meaning that is attributed to it.⁴

So that our presentation does not turn into a study of the sociology of social movements, we refer to the fact that the sociological lesson organizes these social movements into four groups, namely:

- Theory of group behavior
- Theory of mobilization of resources
- The new theory of a social movement and
- The paradigm of action / identity.

Referring to the functional elements that make any movement a social movement, we build on what Charles Tilly found in a historical study. Charles Tilly is considered one of the most important analysts of social movements and he distinguishes three elements mentioned in his book: “Social Movements, 1768-2004” translated (into Arabic) by Mr. Rabih Wahba.

- Campaign: a sustained and organized public effort which dictates collective demands to the targeted authorities.
- Directory of the social movement: a recruitment of possible combinations of the following forms of political action: creation of associations for special purposes, private meetings, public meetings, mighty processions, sit-ins, marches, demonstrations, advocacy campaigns, declarations in public media, brochures or political brochures.
- Presentation of resistance (waqf): The participants represent a set of unified general characteristics, namely: merit, unity, digital momentum and commitment to themselves and / or to their rank-and-file. See Charles Tilly.

I mentioned these functional elements as translated by Mr. Rabih Wahba, and they should be translated in a way that is consistent with our concepts and our political discourse in Morocco, especially in the center of the left, and this is why we understand the campaign element which is the effort that activists make to define the conditions and formulate the program or organization of demands, while the second element relates to all the organizational forms that the protest movement will follow, from the creation of self-organization to methods of protests of the movement, including marches and demon-

⁴ Presentation of a critical study of social movements: “Sociology of social movements” by Professor: François Dubet, prepared by the student Mahmoud Safi Mahmoud.

strations, etc.. As for the last element, it concerns the elements of immunization of the movement and the creation of strong mechanisms to ensure its continuity.

In order to test the availability of these elements in the movements underway in Morocco today, in particular in the Rif and Jerada, we see when they correspond to the extent of the identification, as if the movements and their leaders literally apply what we have experienced here, including the phenomenon of insistence on taking oaths by the leaders of the movement and their rules. Therefore, this part should be read from what some of them have done, accusing the movement of sliding into obscurantism and the Islamic State. Is this not something misunderstood? Not even the necessity, because it simply does not follow up on the question of the commitment and the guarantee of the unity of the movement and its real problems. If the critics understood this need, they could understand it and help the activists to find higher forms and solutions.

2. Conclusions and considerations.

1. The first conclusion.

The left does not pay enough attention to its duties to transform popular demonstrations into protest movements. Rather, it has adopted a false vision of these protest movements insofar as it did not attach any importance to the elements of the social movement, including the prior preparation of the list of demands, the realization of the mass aspect, the consolidation and strengthening of the movement. Its lack of interest in all these questions is the predominance of the concept of the struggle on behalf of the masses, and it is no longer influenced by the idea of going to a sit-in or demonstrations of no more than dozens of people.

2. The second conclusion.

Some protest movements have succeeded in transforming themselves into social movements in the scientific sense, while others have not been able to succeed, as what happened when Mi Fatiha set herself on fire in Kenitra or when 15 women died in Boualam near Essaouira. Wherever protest movements have turned into social movements, we find that the masses were more or less led by what we can call organized intellectuals, themselves former members or still members of left-wing organizations. While in the places we have mentioned, this factor was absent and the backwardness and domina-

tion of the idea of charity prevailed and the "benevolence" of the Makhzen, very active through its apparatus or its brotherhoods.

3. Today's social movements have become a structural fact and they are developing and will become the most important form of the class struggle to the point that some believe that the era has now become one of leadership of the middle bourgeoisie of the revolution or change, which is proposed by the theory of new social movements of Alain Touraine⁵ and others. Some consider that the forms of social movements go beyond the class nature of the protests, and with it the organization in its party form. These are conclusions and appeals that are not based on arguments and real documents, and its adherents who strive or continue to ponder over exaggerated concepts, obsolete organizational forms or old rhetoric will not be helpful. Firmness, courage and responsibility.

The first estimate: sharpening the weapon of organization

As for the Moroccan experience, it was not the first time that the process of criticism by weapons had been imposed. I experienced this need in the mid-1960s and a group of activists led a process of criticism by weapons. The weapon of organization led to the birth of the Marxist-Leninist movement in Morocco (concentrated in a document of the organization Ila al Amam (Forward): "The masks have fallen, so let's open the way to revolution". Even if a new organization was built to meet the demands of this period and to make its contribution to the class struggle in our country, its positive result was what was known from the development of the consciousness of our people and its achievements, of which the most important is the ongoing filtering and the growing isolation of the system of the mass of the ruling class, and in this, the dynamics of the movements of struggle has constituted the marrow of what we are witnessing today.

Today, it has become imperative to wage the criticism by the weapon of organization with the necessary audacity and principle.

The most important criticism to which we have been exposed is our accusation of political talking shops, and the most important manifestation of this criticism is the reluctance of young people to mobilize and voluntarily join our ranks.

⁵ Alain Touraine – New spaces of freedom (with Toni Negri), Dominique Bedou, Paris, 1985; reissued in Paris, Lignes, with the afterword to the 1990 U.S. edition by Toni Negri, 2010.

This is a criticism that hurts us, and even a kind of underestimation of our efforts and the non-involvement of young people in our ranks, as well as a kind of ingratitude and lack of gratitude for our good training for many among them. This is all in the criticism, and there may be something deeper and deeper, but our reaction must be to accept the criticism and to some extent a form of denigration, because as revolutionaries with principles that we practice, and by necessity, the error is characteristic of those who involved in the field. We believe that it is the surest way to face this criticism instead of the other easy way, which is to form a front with all those considered political talking shops and to carry out a campaign of purification and conquest against the propagators of these theses and the fight against anarchism and the supporters of spontaneity.

On the contrary, we must listen to the criticism, analyze its motivations and consider in our thoughts and practice everything that concerns us.

Thus, I believe that the criticism of the left has many truths and it is the credibility of this criticism when we are exposed to it. It will be impossible to reject it completely, in detail and in totality. Whoever does this among us only closes the door to the development of our structures, and very quickly transforms itself into a real political talking shop, rejected by the masses.

Do we accept it because we follow the fashion and we have to water down popular sentiment and not face it? This, in turn, is one of the dangers not to be overlooked, since its opportunist reality will be exposed and the organization will also be turned into the bankruptcy of a political talking shop because it has lost the confidence of its members and the confidence of the masses.

To avoid these dangers, there is no need to consider the feelings that make us appear in the eyes of the masses and their spontaneous vanguard a political talking shop that does not differ from the others and explain why there are these dysfunctions and what are the solutions to overcome them. This is a new type, which is why I consider this process as a collective task because it pushes each member, whatever the areas of his



fight, to reflect on his individual practices and convictions.

In practice, we must further explain among the militants our theses on the four processes and their dialectical interconnection: the process of building an independent party of the working class and all the working masses, the process of building independent organizations of the working masses, the process of building the Popular Front for the popular classes and the process of building the Marxist International. Among them, we are building a revolutionary party which takes the view that the people led by its working class are the ones who will make the change and that nobody will be able to take their place in this historic mission, and that the line of this party is the line of the masses who educates him and from whom he learns, and which he can neither be built outside the class of incubator among the masses, and is the vanguard of the masses, the vanguard involved in the struggle at all levels. A party able to understand Lenin's recommendation when he emphasizes the importance of the party's relationship with the spontaneity of the masses: "the wider the masses spontaneously drawn into the struggle, the more urgent the need of such an organization."⁶

When activists place this fact in evidence, they will be able to merge with the popular struggles and not let these struggles. They will also be able to help build independent organizations for the masses in neighborhoods and sit-ins. Unlike talking shops that seek to make use of these movements, they will be able to take a strong part in it in order to fight against all the harmful proposals that seek to isolate the masses or want to make use of them. Wherever the masses fight, there is the natural place for the militants.

The second estimate: in the strategic role of the workers' party.

Despite the extreme importance of the social movements, they have, as mentioned above, an urgent need for supervision and to strive to achieve the functional elements so that the protest movements become social movements and in order to strengthen the protest movements themselves. They are only acquired by the party or by contact with one of its weapons. Then, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the social movements, left to their own dynamism, can fall into isolationism or dispersion and decomposition because of the ferocity of the confrontation which will be waged by the various repressive, political and ideological apparatuses of the state. In order to

⁶ Lenin – What Is To Be Done?

resolve all these dilemmas by networking the social movements, raising their level and mobilizing for them the national or international powers. The determined political party must be absorbed.

This is how the dialectical relationship between social movements and the party becomes clear. Thanks to this relationship, the dominant and glorifying discourse of spontaneity today, and the denial of the class truth of social conflicts are corrected. By connecting this healthy and dialectical relationship with these movements, the party can play its role as a pillar of the organization of the class struggle. Whenever the best ones are anchored in the ranks of the working class and the laboring classes, it can restore to union action its content of the workers' struggle and take it out of the hands of the bourgeoisie and its subordinates, which will also reinforce the promises of the protest movements in the popular neighborhoods in small or large cities or in remote areas, from protest movements to massive social movements that have lists of demands and mechanisms of the struggle and of strengthening cohesion and unity of the masses in the areas of social movements with various fronts built by militant forces, thus creating nuclei of social fronts which aspire to radical change.

The original text written by El Titi el Habib.

Translated into French and revised by Mohamed Bentaher

January 2020

Spain

Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist) – PCE(M-L)

Call of the PCE (M-L) for Unity

In the face of the coronavirus and economic crisis

The situation caused by the coronavirus has openly and starkly exposed all the flaws of the capitalist system and, in particular, of the monarchical regime of the oligarchy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated and deepened an already announced economic crisis. We are witnessing a debacle for the whole of the popular classes but especially for the working class.

There are already a million and a half workers affected by ERTes (Procedures for the Temporary Regulation of Employment – allowing a company to temporarily suspend an employee despite their contract – *translator's note*); employers are taking advantage of this to lay them off, domestic workers are forced to work, even putting their health at risk, if they want to take money home, workers from essential companies, which have not closed, they do not have adequate security measures, thousands of small businesses have to close, totally or partially, without knowing if they are going to stay in business, there are many unprotected vulnerable groups, many of our elders are neglected, etc.

Health-care workers have to work without adequate rest, due to lack of personnel, without adequate protective material, due to lack of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), masks, etc., putting their health and lives at risk. Beds, ICUs and hospitals are lacking, while some private health care facilities want to lay off staff using ERTes.

Years of neoliberal policies, dismantling and privatization of public services, of strategic companies and economic sectors, budget cuts, etc., in order to increase the profits of big capital at the expense of the well-being and health of the population, explain the situation in which we find ourselves. Policies carried out by the central and autonomous governments of the PP – People's Party – and PSOE – Spanish Socialist Workers Party – (fundamentally, but not only) and the set of state institutions.

In this context, when the needs of our country and its people are pressing, the European Union has been shown to be the project of the big financial capital that it is, show that when making social protection or humanitarian decisions it prefers to look away, to turn responsibility over to the member states and reduce their visibility to the minimum.

We are facing a health, social and economic emergency that, foreseeably, will worsen, and to which the democratic and progressive forces must give a united answer, a solution, an alternative. On the other hand, we are in danger of such a situation being channeled by the reactionary and fascist sectors.

It is for all these reasons that the PCE (ML) calls for the responsibility of all progressive forces (political, union and social) to rise to the occasion in the current circumstances and to fight together, with respect and devotion, against the crisis and anti-popular policies, in favor of the working classes and our peoples, of our future.

We call for progress in the formation of a broad popular front, which would be an expression of the needs and desires of the popular sectors, around this 10-point program:

- 1) ***Maintenance "without setting a date" of the suspension of all layoffs due to the coronavirus and administrative watchfulness so that it is real and effective.***
- 2) ***Repeal of the labor reforms of the PP and the PSOE.***
- 3) ***Immediate return of public money that was given (bailouts) to the banks and privatized toll roads.***
- 4) ***Return to public hands of water, gas and electricity services. Nationalization of the strategic sectors of the economy.***
- 5) ***Repeal of the "Gag Law" and those that violate political rights and freedoms.***
- 6) ***Nationalization and re-municipalization of privatized public services, especially those in the hands of companies that make use of ERES (Procedures for the Regulation of Employment) or ERTES.***
- 7) ***Repeal of the pension reform guaranteeing a decent income for our elderly and dependents.***
- 8) ***Creation of a public park for rental housing. Permanently stop evictions from primary homes by law.***
- 9) ***Repeal of the Law 15/97 and other laws that privatize health care and nationalization of the entire private***

healthcare network. Elimination of the educational subsidies system (in which private schools are given public funds – translator’s note).

10) Renationalization and development of the public transport service to guarantee the ability of workers to move around.

Madrid, March 27, 2020

Tunisia

Ali Jellouli

Party of the Workers of Tunisia

About the Second Wave of Revolutionary Processes in the Arab World

At the end of 2018 some Arab countries experienced the outbreak of popular uprisings which formed what is now called the "second revolutionary wave", which followed the first wave that broke out in late 2010 in Tunisia and spread to other countries. The second wave began in October 2018 in Algeria after the ruling party (FLN) revealed its intention to run President Abdelaziz Bouteflika for a fifth term despite his disability and incapacity to govern. After a few months of respite, the movement resumed again and continued from February 22, 2019 and spread to all the major cities of the country.

This was followed in October 2019 by insurrectionary movements in Lebanon and Iraq against the deterioration of the living conditions of the populations and especially against the religious sectarianism imposed by the former colonizers and which continues to taint all aspects of life including the political power structure. The outbreak of the popular uprising in Sudan against impoverishment, the marginalization of the popular masses, but above all against the tyranny of dictator Omar Al Bashir and his regime, would crown this new revolutionary cycle.

Even if the two waves have many similarities in terms of direct or root causes as well as results, the differences between them are significant. They concern the paths followed, the destinies and the social and political forces involved in one and the other wave. That is why special attention must be paid to these different aspects in order to derive maximum benefit from them, both to improve the processes under way and to gain experience for the battles to come, both in the Arab world and everywhere else.

1. The second wave is a wave of popular revolutions.

In a country of a million and a half martyrs (during the revolution for liberation from French colonialism), Algeria, a country with immense natural resources, notably oil and gas, a popular movement broke out in October 2018 and rapidly developed to mobilize millions

of people in the capital and in all the major urban centers. This time, the movement was not motivated by social reasons as was the case in 1988 during the "revolt for bread" that the military regime had stifled in blood. This time the demand was political: to reject Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth presidential term. The masses thus touched on one of the taboos of public life in the Arab countries, that the people have no right to speak out even if the situation is "tragic", as in the case of Algeria where a corrupt military bureaucracy monopolizes decision-making power, while hiding behind an invalid "civilian president", thus forming a mafia that holds the reins of power.

Bouteflika and his regime, surprised by the movement, tried to divert it through demagoguery by claiming that he is listening to his people and would give up power after six months, after a general national dialogue on the transition. But the determination of the Algerians was such that they imposed on Bouteflika not only the withdrawal of his candidacy, but his immediate resignation, the cancellation of the announced date for the elections and his last appointments to the State apparatus. Then the movement, which was able to bring along large popular masses, was able to develop its demands and slogans centered on political freedom, the fight for a civil and democratic State, the neutrality of the military establishment, the fight against corruption and for the redistribution of wealth. Students, lawyers, doctors, the unemployed and women actively participated in the movement, and trade unionists took the opportunity to open the files on corruption within the union federation (UGTA – General Union of Algerian Workers), whose leaders have always been in the pay of the government in office.

The movement took the form of weekly demonstrations: on Tuesday by the students (and at one point with the participation of lawyers, doctors, etc.) and on Friday (part of the weekend) by the popular masses. Although participation in the movement decreased after the organization of presidential elections in early December 2019, which were won by Abdelmadjid Tebboune, supported by the army, the country's most powerful institution, the movement, after the active and widespread boycott of the elections, remains committed to its slogans and demands, including the rejection of the symbols of the old regime.

In December 2018, following the disappearance of bread from the market, the Sudanese in the capital, Khartoum, went out to protest, but the military regime cracked down on them. This was the trig-

ger for a process of popular protest, which took hold of the demands of the masses and transformed the demand for bread into a demand for freedom, then to the more radical one: the departure of the regime in power, explaining that there would be neither bread nor freedom under this regime, but only on its ruins.

Besides, the Sudanese people have a long history of fighting against the regime of Omar Hassan al-Bashir. He is a soldier who came to power in 1988 through a coup, as well as a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is all that is necessary in the Arab world to establish dictatorial power. For three decades, the country experienced partition (the secession of the south), ethnic, racial and sectarian civil wars, tyranny, corruption, terrorism and impoverishment. The people have opposed this with struggles and uprisings that ended in fire and blood. December 2018 was a historic period, a period of no return, in which the people, with bare hands, gave up a still unknown number of martyrs for the overthrow of the dictator. The insurgent masses created the structures necessary to organize the struggle and take advantage of the ever-increasing forces that joined it. To this day, the people are still a main actor on the Sudanese political scene, despite the maneuvers of the counter-revolution represented by the Islamists and the military and their tireless work to abort the revolution and its achievements.

Before the end of October 2019, massive protest movements broke out in Lebanon and Iraq, protests against the unpopular measures in the budgets for the new year, 2020. In Lebanon, these demonstrations were called "WhatsApp demonstrations" because the first demand was the cancellation of the new taxes on communication services. This arbitrary fiscal measure taken by the Lebanese government was only the trigger for massive and unprecedented popular demonstrations. Indeed, this country is governed by fragile balances between religious sects which were the origin of a devastating civil war between 1975 and 1991. This only ended with Taif Agreement, signed under the auspices of Saudi Arabia among the belligerent parties and establishing a division of power among the main religious denominations. Thus, the three main posts are distributed as follows: the President was to be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of Parliament a Shiite Muslim. Indeed, the forces that dominate the political scene are parties based on religious sectarianism led by traditionally influential families. Also, even the resistance to the Zionist occupation is marked by this prob-

lem, since its main component is the Shiite party "Hezbollah". Previously, it was the Communist Party that formed the backbone of this resistance. At the time of this writing, the movement still retains its zeal despite the fall of the government of Hariri, one of the largest barons of economic and financial corruption, and despite the formation of a new government on the same basis of religious sectarianism, although it claims to be independent.

The uprising of the Lebanese people has succeeded in going beyond this sectarianism and has embraced all the social and political demands of the popular masses; it rejected the class choices of the government in office and the sectarian structure of this power and the party system. Thus it laid the bases of the struggle for a civil and secular state.

This represents the same demands raised by the Iraqi uprising, which broke out at the same period and in a similar context. It has been subjected to the repression, terrorism and assassinations that have left hundreds of dead and thousands wounded, committed by the police and regular army, and by militias affiliated with the parties in office called the "Hachd al-Chaabi" (units of popular mobilization), which often intervened as if they were regular forces. However, the Iraqi uprising maintains its momentum in Baghdad and in the other most important cities, even in Basra, bastion of the dominant religious political forces, the Shiites, who constitute the majority of the population, the majority in Parliament and monopolize the position of Speaker of Parliament.

The different cases mentioned are models of revolutionary processes that have common characteristics but also particularities that distinguish each experience and each country. These models find their root causes in the material reality experienced by the working and impoverished masses, who suffer not only from poverty and destitution, including in two oil countries (Iraq and Algeria), but also from repressive and corrupt regimes. These built their thrones on exclusion, marginalization, authoritarianism, religious sectarianism and the use of religion in the exercise of their power, and dependence on global monopoly capital and its institutions of pillage (the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, European Union, etc.). All of these causes, which have reached their peak, were only waiting for a trigger to create this new wave of popular movements, which have broken out over several months and which continue today despite the repression, the conspiracy and the immaturity of the subjective factors.

2. The particularities of the second revolutionary wave

The first wave ended in the failure or ebb of most of the revolutions due to the absence of revolutionary leadership at the head of these processes. They began peacefully, taking advantage of the decay in the economic, social, political and cultural situation experienced by the poor, the workers and the popular classes in all the Arab countries. This region is truly a typical case of the contradictions of the world capitalist system through a clear paradox: it has a significant share of the world's wealth, particularly in oil, gas, agricultural potential, etc., and at the same time, the living standards of the Arab peoples are the worst when it comes to indicators of growth and development. Indeed most of the political regimes in power are hereditary, corrupt, and despotic monarchies dependent on the imperialist powers. Their economies are based on profit in oil, which is also the main pillar of corruption; meanwhile the masses live in misery, poverty and illiteracy, against a background of religious sectarianism and ethnic rivalries. The first revolutionary wave found its objective material basis in the living conditions of the peoples, classes and popular strata, but the subjective element stood out for its weakness, and even its absence. This is true in many cases, as in Libya, where the parties

and all forms of organization had been banned since Gaddafi came to power in 1969. The greatest weakness was the role played by the working class and the poor peasants, as well by their weak presence on the ground, as well as by the weakness of their union organizations, which were either totally absent or in collusion with the leaders and the reactionary classes. The revolutionary and progressive forces suffer from a



terrible weakness in most of these countries, due mainly to the fact that they were repressed or prohibited before these uprisings. Often their role was limited to supporting these struggles without being able to influence or lead them.

This factor played a decisive role in the failure of these movements, whether by the ability of the regimes to retake the initiative and control the situation (as in Morocco, Mauritania, Bahrain, etc.), or by their takeover by the reactionary movements of political Islam (especially the Muslim Brotherhood), which tried to dominate the movements of the masses because of their human and in particular material abilities compared to those of the progressive forces. The situations in which the Muslim Brotherhood took part in the movement degenerated either into civil wars (as in Libya, Syria and Yemen), or it allowed them to come to power as in Egypt or Tunisia. In Egypt, their victory in the elections opened the door for them to initiate a new religious dictatorship against which the masses very quickly rose up. But it was the army that took advantage of it to regain power through a coup d'état under democratic garb. As for the Tunisian case, and although the Muslim Brotherhood won various successive elections organized since 2011, the presence of the revolutionary and progressive forces and of an active trade union and civil movement meant that the revolutionary process was able to continue with moments of ebb and flow. It was even able to gain some victories relating to the substantial change in the nature of the power enshrined in the New Constitution approved by the Constituent Assembly, and to establish public freedoms, which remain threatened, despite everything. Hence the need to continue the mobilization and accumulation of political, social and civil society forces to bring about a change in the balance of forces and demand the realization of the objectives of the 2011 revolution.

Thus, the first wave ended with the intervention of the regimes in power and regional and international forces, which transformed the uprisings into reactionary civil wars. These supported the terrorist and obscurantist forces and dismantled the fabric of the societies that have engaged in religious sectarian conflicts (Yemen) or in proxy wars for the benefit of the reactionary, imperialist and Zionist regional forces (Libya and Syria). They also helped to take back the gains of the revolution by a despotic, puppet regime that normalized relations with the Zionist state, namely the Egyptian regime.

The first wave failed, and the conditions of the masses became worse than they were, and it cost the people dearly, because the regimes took advantage of this failure to further stigmatize the ideas of revolution, change, democracy, freedom, etc. which, according to their propaganda, have only given rise to terrorism and civil wars. Therefore, it was not easy for a new revolutionary wave to begin. But the material conditions of the masses continued to deteriorate and the objective reasons for the revolution continued to develop. This explains the trigger of a new wave at the end of 2018 in four countries, which have taken specific paths, marked with success. and setbacks. The latter arise in particular from the subjective element and the absence of revolutionary leadership, a necessary condition for the success of revolutions.

We will now begin to analyze each of these models to make clear their strengths and weaknesses.

2.1. The Sudanese Revolution: its trajectory, motive forces and prospects

The path of the Sudanese revolution is similar to that of the Tunisian revolution if we consider the ascending progression of demands, going from partial to global, and from social to political which squarely posed the question of power by chanting the slogan "the people want to overthrow the regime." On December 18, 2018 the people only demanded bread for the students of Khartoum and its inhabitants; despite its legitimacy, this demand was savagely repressed. The regime knew that "the cauldron was boiling". After only a few days, the streets of Khartoum and the country's largest cities were crowded with angry masses who raised the bar with their burning demands related to jobs, prices and better services. When the repression intensified, the slogan became simply the overthrow of the regime that had been stifling the country for three decades. The Sudanese people have demonstrated a remarkable capacity for dedication, sacrifice and resistance to the military dictatorship of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The revolutionary forces played, in a certain sense, an important and active role, during the outbreak and development of the revolution. From the start the revolutionary forces, formed in the heat of struggle and action after Omar Al Bashir came to power in 1989, joined the movement. The Sudanese Communist Party played an active role in the people's struggle and in the unification of these pro-

gressive political, social and civil forces. The party created and contributed to the creation of various organizations. With the parties of the left, the Nasserist and Baathist nationalist parties, it founded the National Consensus Forces (made up of 10 organizations). These are parties which came together on the basis of the common struggle for revolutionary change, and for the unification of forces against the fascist military junta since 2010. The Forces of Freedom and Change united the most important left and liberal opposition forces for the common struggle for democracy and a civil state. This coalition includes the Sudan Call (12 parties) / the Consensus Forces (10 parties) / the Unitary Coalition (7 centrist parties) / and the Civil Coalition. After the overthrow of Al-Bashir, the Centrist Current and the Republican Party joined the movement.

In addition to these political fronts, the Communist Party actively contributed to the creation of the Association of Sudanese Professionals, which is a broad coalition of unions and professional organizations (lawyers, doctors, students, academics, etc.). Thus, the (political and trade union) branches are playing an important role in the whole revolutionary process, and the Forces of the Declaration for Freedom and Change (FDFC) were the political leaders on the ground of the Sudanese revolution. They provided the protesters with slogans, plans of action and programs of response. The masses came out at their request and under their direction, and they organized sit-ins, strikes, civil disobedience; even the general political strike was under their guidance. The Sudanese revolution was not limited to these organizations, but it also used as organs of alternative power the "resistance committees", created since 2013 in the midst of the struggle against



the regime. They returned to action in early 2019, in particular in Khartoum and Omdurman. These committees mainly consist of young active people united in a sort of horizontal organization whose final objective was to overthrow Al-Bashir.

These committees have taken charge of tasks of neighborhood security, and those dealing with police repression. In addition, the resistance committees played an important role in the month-long sit-in outside the headquarters of the General Staff with the "Kendakat", a space for the gathering of women, to activate their role. This is important and vital in a society dominated by tradition (Kendakat means in Sudanese Free and Powerful Woman). These combined conditions enabled the Sudanese people to overthrow the tyrant, but not without the ultimate and decisive intervention of the military. This intervention somehow reflected the inability of the revolutionary forces to completely change the balance of forces in their favor. The revolutionary movement maintained a peaceful character, and this attitude is understandable in a country plagued with civil wars and racial and ethnic pluralism, in which armed groups abound, in addition to its military regime. The orientation of the masses towards the military establishment was due to the power of this institution, which sums up the whole history of contemporary Sudan, which is nothing but the history of successive military coups (including that of 1964, in which the Communist Party took part.)

The revolution succeeded in convincing many officers and soldiers to rally to the people, but the army leadership remained loyal to Al Bashir. Then when it was convinced by the determination of the street, it dropped him, paving the way for a new process that was no less complicated, especially in terms of the organization of power that the army wanted to monopolize. But the determination of the people imposed the exercise of power within the framework of a sovereign council composed equally of representatives of the army and the civilian forces, while the presidency would rotate between the two bodies. Subsequently, a legislative council would be established to draw up a new constitution. It would be made up of representatives appointed by the different forces participating in the revolution. The progressive forces opted for this solution (and not for general elections) because, according to them, the conditions were still not right for a free and democratic electoral process. Indeed, general elections could allow traditionalist and even reactionary forces to advance, given the state of consciousness of the overwhelming majority of the

people, a large part of whom suffer from illiteracy and subjection to tribalism, etc. Similarly, the political struggle is still raging today between the forces of the revolution and those of the counter-revolution, including the leadership of the army. Certainly, the Sudanese people have won important achievements such as political freedom, and the beginning of the dismantling of the apparatus and organs of repression of the overthrown regime (militias, paramilitary organizations, unions and organizations, parallel agencies, etc.), as well as the cease-fire in areas of tension (Darfur, etc.) with the aim of reaching comprehensive and just peace agreements. However, the real battlefield today remains the economic and social front. Added to this are the regional and international relations of Sudan, which include attempts to normalize relations with the Zionist enemy, the realignment of the old regime behind the Qatari / Turkish / NATO axis, and its involvement in the war in Yemen and the sending of thousands of soldiers under the Saudi / Emirate order.

The decisive element in the Sudanese situation is the continued imbalance in the relation of forces between the social classes which, despite a certain improvement for the popular classes, continues to tilt in favor of the ruling classes and the army, which shares power with the civilian forces and which continues to put pressure on them. Great efforts remain to be made by the Sudanese people so that they return to the struggle once and for all and not be satisfied with the gains made that are constantly threatened. In particular, it must continue its struggle to break ties with imperialism and the reactionary forces (the Gulf States) and definitively stop attempts to normalize relations with the Zionist enemy.

Despite the importance of the Sudanese revolutionary process, and the creativity of its progressive forces, including the Communist Party, whose political approaches to the challenges of the revolution have remained correct overall, they still need to undertake the hard work of propaganda and organization within the working class and peasantry, the only guarantee to preserve the gains of the revolution and to sweep away the counter-revolutionary forces. The latter continue to play a leading role on the social and political scene (mainly the army leadership and certain traditional bourgeois forces), or they are hiding temporarily because they were overthrown by the revolution, essentially the Muslim Brotherhood against whom the people rebelled.

2.2. The Lebanese and Iraqi processes: the particularity of their demands and the radicalization of their practice

The particularity of the revolutionary processes in Lebanon and Iraq lies in the question of democracy. In these two countries, power based on many religious sects and tribalism is a fundamental characteristic, due to the reactionary policies adopted by the dominant system. Parasitic classes proliferate, profiting from the resources of the multi-religious state. Paradoxically, the mode of production is distorted, as nowhere else in other countries of the Arab world. This mode of production, which seems modern compared to feudalism, continues to maintain a particularly reactionary superstructure whose fundamental principles are solidarity within the family and the tribe, and the importance of the patriarchy, the ethnic and religious origins. These are the foundations of feudalism with which these two societies have not yet broken.

This duality of religious affiliations (Sunni / Shiite) continues to be a dominant character of all Arab societies. Especially since ethnicity has become a trump card that systematically interferes in the class struggle, in regional or international political struggles. Saudi Arabia, the leader of the Sunni world, and Iran, the leader of the Shiites, constantly intervene everywhere, and plot using the religious trump card, etc.

Lebanon and Iraq are considered “multi-ethnic” countries, and they are often the scene of internal wars in which the Sunnis are supported by Saudi Arabia, and the Shiites are supported Iran, while the popular masses are abandoned to misery at all levels.

We must recognize that revolutionary struggles have always existed since the beginning of the last century. The so-called “communist” parties played a decisive role in the national struggles, among others, as well as in the trade union and democratic struggles. They are today a main actor in the popular movements. The Lebanese Communist Party has a glorious and long history in the national struggle, and despite the recession of the 1990s, it has always been at the head of the protests that began in Lebanon in October 2019. The party and its organizations had an active role on the ground, and even had influence on the movement which allowed it to transform partial social demands into political demands, denouncing the ethnic and class character of those who hold power. The masses who gathered in the streets were no longer content to demand the fall of the government in office,

but they demanded the end of the reactionary religious sectarian system that had taken over the state apparatus since the "Taif agreement" signed in Saudi Arabia in 1990, which ended the civil war. This agreement created a concept of governance that made it possible to guarantee the interests of an oligarchy based on the family and ethnicity, and which enshrined the domination of the local classes; it even transformed the country into a zone of conflicts among the forces of the region. The Lebanese revolutionary process was characterized by the taking over of public places and the targeting of symbols of power such as the presidential palace, the government, the parliament and the big banks. One slogan prevailed in the whole popular movement: "Down with the government of the banks". This followed the decision of the central bank not to pay wages and to only pay a small sum to the employees, an amount to be determined by the director of the bank and his management; they were the target of popular anger, sometimes even more than the symbols of the government.

The movements in Lebanon as well as in Iraq were able to overcome ethnic barriers; they were able to bring together large populations belonging to all ethnicities and religions, from different cities and various sectors. The insurgents in both countries focused their efforts on the organic link between the class system and the system of ethnic governance on the one hand, and the misery of the great popular masses on the other.

Thus, the slogan "the people want to overthrow the regime", which was a central slogan, did not mean only the government in office, but the entire ruling economic, social and cultural system, a system that condemned these two countries to remain at the mercy of corruption, despotism and tribal councils. The movements of the countries succeeded in overthrowing their successive governments,



but a deep political crisis remains in the two states. In Iraq the reactionary ruling classes could not agree on establishing a government. In Lebanon the demonstrators, despite a massive police presence, were able to prevent a majority in the parliament by preventing the entrance of deputies. Parliament had to elect a government without a quorum, which was considered outrageous and indicative of a deep political crisis. The demonstrators did not stop their protests against the measures taken by the government on the order of the IMF. The popular masses in the streets are demanding the overthrow of the new government and the appointment of another government from the popular movement. That government would be called upon to completely overhaul the system of governance, including the dissolution of parties based on tribalism, and to prepare democratic elections which would enshrine citizenship and which would break completely with the old system. It seems that in Iraq as well the forces of the left which joined the popular masses from the start and which work to organize them, are posing the same demands as in Lebanon.

It is entirely correct to recognize that the forces of the left in Iraq are not united, and that the "Communist Party" itself has not been faithful to its glorious past. In 2003, it supported the invasion of Iraq by U.S. imperialism; after the fall of Saddam Hussein, its secretary general was even part of the government called the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) created by Bremer; it also participated in the whole process that gave rise to the current situation. The Communist Party has lost popularity, its impact is less important, some currents have left it, etc. These currents are taking part in the mass movement, trying to leave their mark, especially in the fight against religious sectarianism and tribalism. In this movement, organizational structures have emerged, as in Lebanon; however they remain shaky. In both cases, the progressives are learning lessons from the Tunisian and Sudanese experiences. In Lebanon, a "grouping of professionals" has been created (under the influence of the experience of the Sudan) to unify the trade union and social forces which have been weak and limited from the start, and which suffer from the domination of religious sectarianism. In Iraq, sectoral and regional coalitions and alliances have been formed to support the trade union movement, which in fact has a leading role in the movement.

The militant impact remains weak, however, despite the role played by the Lebanese Communist Party, the left circles with various factions, and especially that played by the intellectuals and artists. As

for Iraq, on a subjective level, and despite the importance of the movement, the Communist Party and the left currents could be easily infiltrated by local or regional forces which have influence, in order to make use of the party in the struggle against Iran by targeting their agents, now in power.

It must be recognized that the revolutionary processes in Lebanon as well as in Iraq differ from the Sudanese prototype. They are gaining momentum, they are continuing, and are in the process of achieving gains by strengthening the secular and progressive current, and also by courageously confronting religious sectarianism, something which, a month ago, seemed impossible. Now, demanding a democratic and secular state has become a popular slogan. Being able to keep the popular movement peaceful is in itself very important, in a regional governed by the chaos produced by arms, and by the violence of regional and international interventions (such as in Syria). The popular masses have not forgotten the need to free the Lebanese territories invaded by the Zionist entity, the expulsion of the U.S. invaders and the withdrawal of their bases from Iraq; they have also not forgotten their rejection of Saudi and Iranian interventions. The political situation in the region is very fragile, and the revolutionary forces must redouble their efforts to achieve their objectives. One of the most important tasks is the emergence of a revolutionary vanguard from within the popular movement. It is imperative that the revolutionary forces in the region, and also at the international level, take up their responsibility in the face of what is happening in order to rectify the situation and protect the revolutionary processes.

2.3. The Algerian model: strengths and weaknesses

From the start, the Algerian movement was fundamentally political. The popular masses demonstrated against a fifth term for President Bouteflika, who wanted to renew his candidacy for the presidency. This candidacy which would have undoubtedly led him to return as head of state in view of the stranglehold on the State apparatus since 1962, the date of its independence. The rulers until the 1980s were prominent names in the army. But since the "democratization" of Algeria in the early 1990s, civilians have headed the executive, civilians manipulated by the will of the military. Bouteflika was one of them. Having become old and half-paralyzed, he remained president for two decades. The Algerians in the various regions of the country took to the streets, which created a great unease in the gov-

ernment. Even the intensity of the repression did not quell these millions of people who protested, and the army, as the real decision maker in the country, proclaimed themselves responsible for the security of the demonstrators. The mass movement was able to succeed in not only forcing Bouteflika to withdraw his candidacy, but also to resign before the end of his term. He had to resign without even waiting for the organization of national coalition, which was to result in the amendment of the constitution to limit the president to two consecutive terms. Following the resignation of Bouteflika, a historic moment for the country, the popular masses continued the struggle for the implementation of fundamental reforms in the system of governance, and also into questioning the economic and social choices that exist. The movement was able to mobilize very important sectors, and the slogans that were chanted had a deeply political and progressive content. What characterized the mass movement in Algeria was the rejection of parties. It did not want the participation or support of parties, and there were even attacks on certain leaders of political parties. The presence of Islamist forces (either pro-government or in the opposition) was almost non-existent at the start of the movement. The Algerian movement had a horizontal organization through the fundamental sectors which took part in it such as students, lawyers, judges, doctors, etc. After that, the popular masses organized the Friday actions, in which a very large number of people took part, including those who go to the mosque regularly. At the same time, the students, and to a lesser extent the elite sectors, continued to organize the Tuesday actions, demonstrations that began in universities, the courts, the places from which union activists left, etc. Until not long ago, these movements were able to preserve their breadth despite differences among the participants; they were also able to maintain the clarity of their slogans, which revolved around putting an end to the system of governance and the establishment of a civil and democratic state. The question about the protest movement was: who was in the leadership? We assume that certain forces behind the movement reflected a struggle of clans that existed within the ruling classes. This is perhaps the most important weak point which undermined the left movement, whose unity was already very fragile. The left movement, organized in different factions (Trotskyist, Social-Democratic, etc.) is itself weak and disorganized. Just think of the woman leader of the (Trotskyist) labor party, who rotted for almost a year in prison as part of the fight against the corruption of the Bouteflika clique. She was

found innocent and released after being sentenced to 15 years in prison in the lower court.

The Algerian movement, despite the legitimacy of its demands and its ability to mobilize a large segment of the population, was a movement without a vanguard and without a clear program. These were weaknesses which have been well exploited by the reactionary forces in order to divert the movement from its initial aim, which is the struggle for progress and democracy.

3. Where is the revolutionary process in the Arab countries going?

The Arab world is not the worst regions in term of the situation of the people, nor in terms of its reactionary political systems, even less in regard to imperialist domination. But it seems that the Arab world is the worst region in terms of the weakness of the revolutionary and communist forces. Outside of Tunisia and Morocco, where there are revolutionary Marxist-Leninist parties, parties of combat, most of the parties in the other countries of the region that were formerly communist have disappeared or have allied themselves with the ruling system as did the former communist parties of Tunisia and Morocco. Other parties continue to be active by adopting points of view in agreement with the interests of the popular masses, as in Lebanon; despite its decrease in followers, it continues to hold radical positions. We can say the same thing about the Sudanese Communist Party, which despite monumental errors (support for the coup of 1963 and that of 1983, etc.), it has always stood on the side of the popular masses, and we consider it to be a fighting party, especially since the rise to power of dictator Omar Al Bashir in 1989. It has since known how to preserve the flames of resistance by playing a central and glorious role in the revolution. We can say without hesitation that the Lebanese and Sudanese parties have played an essential role in the revolutionary processes in these two countries. The fact remains that the weakness of these parties and of the revolutionary fronts show the absence of Marxist-Leninist organizations which would not have hesitated to push the revolutionary process to the end, and to mobilize all the political and logistical resources.

These revolutions are a ray of hope in a rather dismal Arab world. Just as the Tunisian revolution gave the signal to other revolutions in some of the neighboring Arab countries, the Sudanese revolution is the signal for a second wave, more radical, more careful, with

a clearer vision. These are revolutionary processes in which the Islamists did not take part, processes which targeted the ruling systems of governance in Sudan, Lebanon and Iraq (religious parties in power). These revolutions have a democratic aim, totally opposed to the ethnic and religious sectarian system. These are revolutions in which progressive and revolutionary forces have participated in varying degrees. These are revolutions in which women have been particularly active in a cultural and civilizational environment that continues to exclude women from the public sphere.

Despite the difference between the two revolutionary waves, the most important common point is the weakness, if not the absence, of the revolutionary vanguard, to the advantage of the disorganized forces of civil society for the most part. These have a limited view, not looking for fundamental reforms such as the overthrow of the relations of production based on exploitation, and not seeking to change the political system.

In the midst of these two revolutionary waves, the Palestinian revolution still continues to shine, despite its great weaknesses.

March 2020

Turkey

Party of Labour (EMEP) – Turkey

March 8 and the Oppression of Women

Another 8th of March has arrived and it could be said that once more the issue is “*put aside*”! All over the world, in activities differing in size and participation, women came together and embraced ‘International Working Women’s Day’ as a day to unite and show solidarity, protesting oppression and prejudice against women.

According to data from the “*We will stop femicides*” platform in Turkey, the number of women murdered between 2010 and 2019 were 180, 121, 210, 237, 293, 303, 328, 409, 440, and 474 respectively. According to the Interior Ministry, overseen by President Erdoğan, of the 1,015,337 violent acts against women in Turkey, 1890 resulted in deaths; 94 of the murdered women were under government protection. Fuat Oktay, an aide to the President, revealed that 514,000 people sought help from the “*Centre for preventing violence*” in the last 7 years. Data show that more than half of the attacks and murders took place within the home or related areas. However, reporting of the data on violence against women in Turkey points to a narrow “*family relation*” approach in recording. The violence displayed by the capitalists and the privileged in factories and work places and the ‘weaponised gang’ attacks on women are not included in the data, neither are they seen as violence. The ideological-cultural approach that sees it ‘vital’ to religious and educational learning to start young in teaching children the ‘supremacy’ and ‘rights’ of man over woman encourages prejudice and violence against women, supported by ‘*masculine legislation*’.

When the problem is approached from the wider angle of unequal relationships and understanding between genders, the link between formation of intersexual relations and the type of social production and socio-economic relations is revealed. If we continue with examples from Turkey: being paid almost half the salary men do for the same job; making up one third of the working population and less than a fifth of active roles in unions and political organisations; condemned to “*housework, familial tasks*”; the ‘social status of woman’ is clearly exposed.

In January 2018, 29.3% of the unemployed population was aged between 15 and 24, with unemployment among young women at 32.9%. By February 2020 the number of unemployed women graduates had reached 752,000. In January 2019 only 28.1% of women of working age had the opportunity to work; of those 56.1% worked in the service sector, 28.3% in agriculture and 15.6% in industry (source: National Statistics Office, TÜİK). Millions of workers are classified as members of ‘*families in poverty*’, with monthly earnings of around 150 Euros (an average of 150 Euros for men and 100 Euros for women). Very little childcare opportunities exist for working women in workplaces and government offices. According to research conducted by DİSK (one of the three biggest trade union confederations in Turkey), of the 9.3 million children only 96,000 (0.1%) have access to childminding services provided by the government.

However, the woman issue and problems faced by working women are not limited to these; neither can they be taken in the framework of local issues faced by women of Turkey. This is a ‘social issue of worldwide proportions’. More than half of the global population is women but women are the oppressed sex. Women are subjected to capitalist oppression and exploitation as well as oppression with characteristics of feudalism and even slavery in some countries. This is true in many African and Middle East countries as well as countries with big populations such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Nicaragua, China, Brazil and India, the majority of low-paid workers are women. The big gap between the wages of men and women doing the same work persists. According to the 2018-19 Global Incomes Report by the ILO the difference globally is 18.8%.¹ The number of women murdered in Germany and England in 2017 was 123 and 139 respectively and in Mexico in 2019 it was 320. In Brazil in 2018 the number of murdered women stood at 1,206. In capitalist countries, even the most advanced ones in terms of bourgeois-democratic rights, oppression against women continues in different forms. There are countries in which women don’t have the same voting rights as men, and where the number of children they can have is dictated from above, as abortion is still illegal.

¹ This ratio is 11.7% in Norway, 13.3% in France; 16.6% in England, 26.4% in Brazil and 22.1% in Portugal.

In imperialist and reactionary wars women are always among the first targets of the savagery. This kind of violence is currently observed in parts of Africa and Asia. While workers' living conditions worsen during wars and crisis, violence and oppression also break through the walls and make households unbearable. Workers' 'households' and women bear the brunt of worsening living conditions faced by the poverty-stricken masses. Capitalist rivalry, competition for markets and spheres of influence, chauvinism and enmity towards foreigners lead to the destruction of habitats and people leave their lands in tens and hundreds of thousands, on the road to foreign lands; women and children are subjected to the heaviest blows and scarring experiences.

In factories, companies and workplaces, subjected to the oppression of bosses and their paid 'stewards', forced to compete with men in the relentless tempo of the production line, women workers are first on lists of dismissal and seen as a burden due to reasons that lead to 'extra social costs' such as pregnancy, maternity leave, nursing rooms, crèches and child payments; they are made to work in low paid and insecure (flexible, seasonal and temporary) jobs, without any social security.

Compared to previous centuries, more woman workers take part in capitalist production relations in more countries today. Along with advances in production and work observed in the internationalisation of capital and the labour movement, women's work has increasingly been turned into a form of oppression, including in countries such as China, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which are 'centres' of low-paid workforces. Privatisation, flexible working practices, intensified discipline and controls at work, physical and mental exhaustion of workers due to technical practices aimed at improving productivity; advances in methods of exploitation of women and child workers through work sent home and piece work; all this led to the spread of plain oppression of women sustained by more technical practices.

This 'advance' means that "*limited legal rights, insecure work, low wages, long working hours, high rates of workplace accidents and work-related illnesses*" become common practice in working life. Therefore, the opportunity to link the women issue with improving living and working conditions of proletarian and working masses in all capitalist countries and the struggle against exploitation and oppression is further advanced. This situation is more clearly observed once we investigate women becoming the oppressed gender and how

this has developed in relation to the mode of production and social conditions.

Women have become the oppressed gender

Like all other social issues, at the base of the inequality between man and woman, or the privileged position of man against woman, is the way humans own the product of their material activity, the issue of who owns the *'wealth'*. Engels says that this privilege starts with the division of labour and the unequal share of produce, arguing that *"the overthrow of mother right was the world historical defeat of the female sex"*.

The *'patriarchal family'* based on the rule of the male and the continuation of lineage through fatherhood were borne out of the need for children to be next in line to take over the father's wealth, hence man began to decide what *'the bond of marriage'* is, how it will be carried out, continued or finished; through the historical rise of this situation, and especially the monogamous *'modern bourgeois family'*, housework and *'household management'* ceased to have any social context and became a *'private service'*; women – removed from social production – became or were reduced to being the *'head servant'* according to Engels.

With *'distancing from social production'*, **woman's oppression** – itself a feature of the historical process linked to the development of *'patriarchal family'* – existed in historical periods long before the development of capitalist modes of production and social structure. This situation was constantly reproduced through different forms of private ownership and the exploitation of labour and continued to the current day. On the one hand, capitalism contributed to the issue of socialisation of the woman by women entering more into social interactions and social production and on the other, gilded the chains of slavery of woman through more 'modern' and deliberate methods of oppression and exploitation.

While, in the bourgeois society, the structure and relations of the family are conditioned and reshaped by capitalist relations, the bourgeoisie also took over family relations of the pre-capitalist society, turning it into a factor linked to the requirements of capitalist production and reproduction. Housework (within the family such as cooking, cleaning, looking after children and the elderly, etc.) continued to be a family duty and especially the job of the woman within the family and so did woman's position as the *'servant of the house'*. For the

bourgeoisie, family life was important as long as it continued to enable the exploitation of labour. With the labour power of women and children entering into production when the man's income was not enough, capitalists also found another way to make them work cheaply by giving work to take home (production at home). Arisen due to organisation of labour in line with the needs of capitalist production, this situation kept changing depending on the size of this reserve workforce and capitalists' need for labour. The need for cheap labour helped women's labour-power enter into production for capital profit.

The position of women and children, entering into production in line with the needs of capitalist production and especially mechanised mass production, led to a radical change in the '*institution*' of the family and its relations, but '*patriarchal*' obedience and relations still suited the bourgeoisie.² While families and interfamily relations changed in line with capitalist production and organisation of work, despite some changes dependent on social advances, housework continued to be done mainly by women, within the context of the reproduction of labour and lineage and its necessities.³

² In terms of the bourgeois family, trained educators and tutors can be found for the education of the child; the proletarian family has no such opportunity. This situation is mirrored in clothing, cultural activities and physical-mental courses aimed at developing individual abilities. The working woman will need to either look after her child or run to work in the factory or the workplace, leaving her younger child with her elder children – in reality themselves in need of looking after. An issue of undernourishment and lack of care exists in both scenarios. The mother is attached to the machine during the workday; even when it is available, childcare is beyond the reach of working-labouring mothers due to cost. Hence, the fact that childcare is the responsibility of the family means that they are faced by lack of opportunity and limitations from the beginning. Not only is the working woman's time for her child, partner, home limited; the time that they spend together is reduced. The woman's involvement in the cogs of the factory life leads to physical and mental effects; exhaustion and early onset of health problems.

³ As a part of the changing social relations due to development in means of production, proletarian and working classes and the struggle of the sections of women among them and the increasing entry of women into production play a role as a changing factor in making the household tasks not just "*women's work*". The change in the direction of man and

Capitalist production and ‘household service’

Capitalism, with women entering into production of surplus value, led to ‘somewhat of a breakdown’ in the mechanism of the patriarchal family as well as other changes. Once the man’s income was not enough to meet basic needs in life, woman’s labour became more involved in the capitalist production process.

Women started working in factories, workplaces, workshops and government offices. ‘Extended’ modes of work related to capitalist production such as piece work and work that was sent home followed. Woman’s place in social relations changed drastically compared to previous centuries. Men and women more often got together in the same workplaces. Working under the same conditions, material conditions of the common issues they faced and the prejudiced capitalist practices against women became more apparent. The class character of the woman issue and freedom of women was unveiled by the approach of working woman in social relations. This situation and the conditions undoubtedly demonstrated that proletarian men and women need to enter the struggle together to free themselves from exploitation and oppression.

Production is a process where “*the capitalist consumes labour-power*”. The labour-power of the worker is transformed into products, capital, means of subsistence and production.⁴ This makes the worker an “*irreplaceable source of production for the capitalist*”. Labour must exist as “*living labour*”.⁵ “*The maintenance and reproduction of the working class is a necessary condition to the reproduction of capital. But the capitalist may safely leave its fulfilment to the labourer’s instincts of self-preservation and of propagation. All the capitalist cares for, is to reduce the labourer’s individual consumption as far as possible to what is strictly necessary...*”⁶

woman carrying these tasks together, while still mainly carried out by women, continues as a positive development.

⁴ K. Marx, Capital Vol. I., English edition, Progress Publishers, Mosco, pg. 535

⁵ Despite the processes that are less labour intensive and that increasingly push workers into unemployment, such as machinisation and its advance, production lines, use of robot in production; the fact that capitalist surplus-value exploitation cannot be continued without the exploitation of labour-power sustains the need for living labour-power.

⁶ K. Marx, Capital Vol. I., English edition, pg. 537

The workers' individual consumption is necessary for their maintenance and "*reproduction*". Capitalist production forces the worker to sell his/her labour-power and "*enables the capitalist to purchase labour-power in order that he may enrich himself*". "*Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer.*"⁷

The bourgeois feminist approach, which perceives woman's position as the oppressed sex in the context of "*reproduction*" and reduces reproduction to "*reproduction of labour-power*", invents "*a second area of exploitation*" through encapsulating the relationship between man and woman within "*exploitation*" of woman in the home by man.⁸ This perception, in direct contrast with Marxist "*labour theory of value*" claims that it "*provides an answer to gaps in Marx's analysis of production-reproduction*".

According to this approach, which could be named feminist "*reproduction theory*", "*human reproduction*" – meaning the continuation of humans as a species, is separated as the task of a woman! Capitalism has "*appointed women to human reproduction*", "*gendered*" social reproduction, linked it to woman's "*gender roles in society*"!

According to this approach, which also names capitalism as "*patriarchal capitalism*", woman's labour is simultaneously subjected to capitalist and patriarchal exploitation ("*double exploitation*"); this duality, plays a role in determining "*woman's gender role in society*" based on its "*interests in conflict or agreement - depending on the conditions - with the labour, body and gender of women*"! In this context "*woman's service to the household and especially to man*" due to her role in reproduction enters the realm of capitalist production and is subjected to exploitation. From this perspective production and reproduction are seen as different phases and forms of relationship; reproduction is reduced to the reproduction of the labour-power.

⁷ Ibid., pg. 542

⁸ For approaches of this type see, Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory*, and C. Arruzza, T. Bhattacharya & N. Fraser, "Notes for a Feminist Manifesto", *New Left Review* 114, November-December Issue: pg. 113-134.

Formulating the relationship between man and woman through “*their roles in the household*” and making ambiguous the role of the paid worker – who also increases capital – in the process of capitalist production; the concept of labour is then identified with the exploitation of labour-power and all forms of labour are seen as a source of exploitation. Hence, through the reproduction of the species and the housework carried out by the woman, capitalist production is reduced to being measured by housework. From this point of view there is no difference between the worker’s role in the factory or the workplace and the woman carrying out housework.

In fact, labour as a creative and reproductive activity and labour that increases capital have different functions. All humans labour for a task; but that is not the issue. The issue is the reproduction of labour-power as a source of physical and mental capacity to work - within the production and reproduction phases of capitalism - and the role of species’ reproduction! The purchasing of labour-power by the capitalist is due to its function as a creator of wealth. The amount of capital invested at the start of the ‘cycle’ and the amount obtained at the end must be different. This difference is created by the worker’s capacity to work and his/her ability, for the capitalist to use or take over this potential. The worker, beyond what s/he is paid creates wealth for the capitalist that includes surplus value, and this is created during the workday.

Social production and reproduction are neither two processes that are isolated from each other nor do they involve a separation to be carried out in different locations such as ‘the home’ and ‘the factory’.



The realisation of products through unpaid labour, following its wresting “*directly from workers*”, does not consist of distinct labours of woman at home and workers in the factory; it is realised as the process of production and reproduction by the worker, selling his/her labour-power to the capitalist for a fee. “*Whatever the form of the process of production in a society, it must be a continuous process, must continue to go periodically through the same phases... When viewed, therefore, as a connected whole, and as flowing on with incessant renewal, every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction. The conditions of production are also those of reproduction. No society can go on producing, in other words, no society can reproduce, unless it constantly reconverts a part of its products into means of production, or elements of fresh products...*”⁹

Just like other social problems, the woman’s question has emerged in connection with the mode of production and reproduction of material life. The relation which led women to become the oppressed gender has been inherited by capitalist social conditions with roots going far back, has been reshaped and maintained.

The relation of production-reproduction is a simple phenomenon which “*takes place every day before our eyes*” in capitalist society. Capitalist production is based on profit. “*The capitalist... who extracts unpaid labour directly from the labourers, and fixes it in commodities*”¹⁰, wants to carry on with this later and he/she does. This capitalist character of the mode of production applies to reproduction as well.¹¹ The production process is also a process of reproduction. In Engels’ words, “*This is of a twofold character. On the one side, the production of the means of subsistence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species.*”¹² Reproduction is not a “*different production*” which happens in a different place, nor does it involve different types of labour (here the labour power of the ‘housewife’) in production.

⁹ K. Marx, Capital Vol. I., English edition, pg. 531

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, “Part VII: The Accumulation of Capital”, English edition, p. 529

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 531

¹² F. Engels, Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, “Preface to the First Edition”

Workers are producing today and they need to produce in the following days. They need to be ready for this; they must have the strength to do this with the help of what is needed, food, rest, sleep, etc. The reproduction of the species or of new generations is indirectly linked with this. The production and reproduction of material life also involves the production of all the essentials of life and the production of the human beings themselves. It is a wholesome process where production and reproduction has to carry on independently of the societal form in which humans live as a species and social beings. This relation differs in accordance with the characteristics of class society in the historical process but production and reproduction of material life constitute the basis of every social formation.

For the view which reduces reproduction solely to the labour power getting ready for the production next day(s) and to the reproduction of next generations, without considering the continuation of production in repetitions/renewals, the reproduction of labour power is isolated from its function of producing value in the process of production, is considered only for getting ready for work, and is turned into something one-sided through the role of woman's labour in this. Yet these two things, though interconnected, have their own characteristics which cannot replace one another. Thus, reproduction cannot be reduced to the reproduction of labour power. A worker is important to the capitalist because they produce exchange value. They produce and reproduce commodities. For that, they need to reproduce themselves, too. This is the precondition for the extended reproduction of capital.

If we leave aside the fact that female workers are increasingly subjected to direct capitalist exploitation through piece work and taking work home, the labour expended by woman through her work in the house has a function of contributing to the production and reproduction of labour power and to the retention and maintenance of the worker's capacity/power to work.

The meaning of a capitalist 'stealing' the time away from production of the worker's family lies in this function. This type of labour expenditure does not con-



tain a direct involvement in capitalist production and reproduction. A female worker taking part in social production and undertaking household chores does not produce any surplus product or value directly for the capitalist by doing these chores as part of “*household service*”, nor does she create any source for the male worker in the household to have private property and increase his capital.

Nevertheless, due to its contribution to the reproduction of labour power and new generations, *household service* is tied to capitalist relations. However, a woman taking part in social production materialising capitalist commodities and contributing to the reproduction of the worker’s capacity to work do not have the same characteristics. Therefore, those who put forward a “*dual exploitation*” thesis about woman, either through the woman’s *role in getting ready* the male worker – if he is the one with wage labour – for the next day by way of her undertaking of household chores, or with the supposition that capitalist exploitation extends into the household through this relation, do in fact veil the main characteristic of the capitalist use of labour power by making parallels between women’s doing household chores and the worker-capitalist relation.

The feminist approach claims to make woman the “*political subject*” and identifies the “private area” (the house and the family) as the area of women’s struggle. It proposes a struggle not against capitalist exploitation but against the male gender in general and the individual man of the household in particular. This “*proposal*”, or even imposition, does not only exclude the reproduction of female labour power in dealing with the social reproduction of labour power, but it also puts the “*household labour*” of female labourers in the category of “patriarchal exploitation” (exploitation of women by men) through its relation with the male worker. As “*social gender*” man and woman are classified on the basis of the relationship at home and in the family as “*patriarchal feudal*” and “capitalist” for the former, and oppressed and “*exploited*” for the latter.

As the problem and the contradiction is laid out in this way, the aims and objectives of the struggle change, too. With the mantra “Men and capital hand in hand exploit women” this understanding places the man at the centre of women’s struggle, and envisages women from ‘different classes, nations, religions and cultures’ to unite ‘embracing all their differences’ in the struggle against the “*male subject*” which is the “*common oppressor*”.

According to this distorted view, there are two sides in the struggle – men and women; the men in the family can be placed in the “*exploiting*” class as they benefit financially from women undertaking the chores like cleaning, cooking, caring for the young and the elderly; and demand a “*scheme of rules*” in terms of the relations with men, “rules determined just like the ones in a collective bargaining contract”. This distorted approach draws the notion of exploitation and class enemy into the household and diverts the fight against the capitalist system of exploitation and bourgeois class rule. It sees women as a “social class” and men as the “*exploiting class*”, “*hand in hand with capital*”, and calls women to struggle against men “*for a radical change*”, thus playing the role of sabotaging the struggle of the working masses of women, and causing practical and ideational destruction.

Women’s struggle for emancipation

The evolution of the historical conditions which led women to become the oppressed gender and the “*slave in the house*” is also explanatory in terms of the conditions of freeing them from this situation. Quoting from Marx, Engels says “*large-scale industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the socially organised process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes.*”¹³

By preparing the preconditions and creating the social basis for the emancipation of the proletariat, capitalism is condemned to signing its own death warrant as well as preparing the material conditions for the eradication of inequality and household slavery of women before men, which stems from private property. With doing away with private property, those relations which were established “*through private property*” will be replaced by humane and free relations. The relation of the family structure where woman’s slavery continues in terms of housework with capitalist mode of production is bound to fall down with the eradication of capital, as it will be deprived of its social basis. Engels states that “*...the peculiar character of the supremacy of the husband over the wife in the modern family, the ne-*

¹³ F. Engels, Anti Duhring, Part III, “V. State, Family Education”, quoting from Marx’s Capital Vol I

*cessity of creating real social equality between them, and the way to do it, will only be seen in the full light of day when both possess legally complete equality of legal rights”.*¹⁴

Women’s struggle against oppression and exploitation and for equal rights as well as the emergence of the women’s movement began hundreds of years ago. However, it was not until the emergence of Marxism and the socialist workers’ movement that the scientific view became dominant that the real solution to this problem was connected to the eradication of the conditions that created exploitation.

As long as the mode and relations of production which makes male and female labour power the sine qua non for the extended reproduction of capital continue to exist, examples of advanced Western capitalist societies show that woman’s “*gender slavery*” will not cease.¹⁵ The struggle of the majority of women, i.e. labouring women as “*housewives*”, doing piecemeal or freelance work, women workers working from home as part of capitalist production process, or women workers in the factories, schools or hospitals cannot just be content with the improvement in living and working conditions. The struggle to end women’s position as the oppressed gender and to free the working woman from exploitation requires a class-based perspective which can overcome the division between in-house and out-of-house, which can shape the struggle of the female labourer with the male, united as one against capitalist exploitation and bourgeois repression, and which can expand this struggle for the eradication of the capitalist private usurpation of surplus value. The question of women’s emancipation cannot be resolved unless a fundamental change in the hegemonic social conditions which feed into patriarchal understanding, including the gender inequality between man and woman and repression by men, is made.

¹⁴ F. Engels, Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Chapter II, part 4 “The Monogamous Family”

¹⁵ With capitalist development and large-scale industry, the woman’s position bound to the house changed to a large extent. The conditions of “household slavery” and being bounded by housework also changed. Scientific and technological advances have made housework easier, though not leading to a fundamental change in terms of the woman’s containment in the house and the kitchen. The system continues to produce exploitation and inequality.

The period of socialist construction, when huge steps were taken to lift the obstacles to women with children taking an active part in social life, had concretely shown that it was possible to eradicate household slavery. This transformation has also unveiled the tight connection between “*wage slavery*” and “*household slavery*”. It became clear that unless those conditions that enable the exploitation of labour power are eradicated, it is not possible for woman to free herself from being considered and treated as a “*secondary gender*”, “*household slave*”, “*subordinate to man*”, “*someone with limited participation in social life*”. The progress in the productive forces and in the means of production and scientific and technological advances shows that it is possible for domestic household chores to be unlinked from women and to become socialised.

When the woman question and the struggle for the freedom of women from oppression and exploitation is dealt with in such a way that the relations between woman and man is isolated from the formation of class societies and their evolution in parallel with historical development, and in which inequality and oppression is reduced to a question regarding woman and man as individuals and the “family” circle, then the determining and conditioning relations of capitalist production and bourgeois society become invisible, and the patriarchal heritage taken over from pre-capitalist societies will have a veil of innocence.

It is often seen that not only various groups in the feminist movement but also those circles under the influence of liberal-anarchist views which claim to be Marxist fall into this impasse. This approach focuses on woman doing the household chores and her role in the reproduction of the labour power and the future generations, and reduces the concept of exploitation to an inner home and inner family relationship, veiling the exploitation of labour power by the capitalist, and stressing the former in such a way that ignores capitalist relations of production and bourgeois social conditions. Yet, it is the capitalist mode of production, capitalist relations of production and bourgeois social conditions that nurture, contain and sustain the “*patriarchal gender relations*” in our day.

In order to end the domination of woman as a gender with all its aspects, it is necessary to end “*all relations of exploitation and domination*” as well as all those views and behaviours shaped and conditioned by these forms of exploitation and relations. Beyond this would depend on future phases of social forms that humanity will

achieve. The historical materialist approach refuses to substitute material social realities with imaginary scenarios and to fall into the superficiality of laying the rules for the future.

The end of capitalist ownership of the means of production will create the conditions for the liberation of society as a whole, also making redundant the forms of relations and political formations which had led to the repression of human by human and woman by man. With the eradication of the forms of relations that necessitate oppression and the cease of exploitation will enable the end of the capitalist form of private ownership and the relations linked with that form, leading the way to the emergence of social conditions for real freedom and equality of humans and women as “*its half*”.

“With the transfer of the means of production into common ownership, the monogamous family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair; society looks after all children alike, whether they are born out of wedlock or not.”¹⁶ And this would create new life habits. It would then be possible to have man-woman relations based on love and free from ownership/property concerns.

Until we reach that stage, the workers with class consciousness and the revolutionary working class parties must carry on the political, cultural and ideological struggle against discriminative oppression and violence against women. In order to unite men and women in the struggle for the eradication of all class divisions, they must wage a determined fight against all forms of views and behaviours that stem from the unequal, patriarchal and repressive relations which are a result of pre-capitalist and capitalist social conditions, also aiming to educate and change.

Violence, oppression and gender discrimination against women must end; equal rights for man and woman before the law must be adhered to; all interventions in individual rights such as abortion and divorce must cease. Adequate resources for the health of women and children must be made available; care for children, elderly and the sick must be socialised; factories, workplaces and institutions with a certain number of workers (50 for example) must have in-house health provisions; there must be an extended leave for maternity and paternity as well as weddings. As a result of the “neoliberal” policies

¹⁶ F. Engels, Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State

of privatisation, casual work and the cutting back of social rights, living conditions have deteriorated with increasing poverty and unemployment. In order to improve the living and working conditions for women it is vital to demand free and accessible education and health services, an adequate income to meet all essential needs, job security for everyone who can work, and crèches and nursing rooms in the workplace.

A determined struggle against all forms of violence against women, underpayment for women's labour power, job offers not suitable for women's health, against torture and rape, bans on abortion, imposition of religion and a certain way of life will bring closer the aim to eradicate all forms of oppression and exploitation.

It is very important that the fight for democratic rights and the struggle against the social source and pillars of oppression and exploitation are united and carried out as one. It is up to the strength of this unity and how effectively this struggle is carried out that will lead to the change in grave living and working conditions that proletarian and working women are subjected to, and break the influence of legal, traditional, patriarchal barriers to women's participation in social life.

Due to various levels and forms of oppression they face, i.e. being the oppressed gender, women have some "common problems". Therefore, it is possible to come together in struggle around common demands against various manifestations of inequality and oppression. However, the content, scope and aims of some "*women's actions*" and struggles undertaken by women from various social strata are different from the emancipation struggle of women from the working class and labourers against the hegemony of capital. Bourgeois women, though part of the "*oppressed gender*", cannot be expected to share and unite around the class-based demands of the women working in the factories or other workplaces. In terms of such demands, they would be expected to position themselves against the proletarian women. Therefore, the rhetoric about the solidarity between women from different social classes is *relative* and the more it is about *class interests* the more it becomes invalid. The description of general characteristics of women's social position and their relations with the opposite gender **cannot be based on the small sample of "businesswomen" who have capitalist opportunities, or of "stateswomen"** which is another exception, as this would divert the woman's question. The extent of this question cannot be measured by a tally of World Bank's announcements of "*Women's Year*" or "*how*

logical investment in women is”, nor by the increase of the number of women rising up to positions of “*businesswoman*” or high-level bureaucracy, or the “*appearance*” of women who take part in bourgeois political activity.¹⁷

At a time when women and children migrate en masse because of conflicts and wars, chauvinist nationalism, economic problems and lack of safety, victimized by human traffickers or the organ mafia, when violence against women and poverty become widespread, it becomes even more clear that the social basis of the oppression of woman as a gender is capitalism and the private property system.

The question of women’s social emancipation cannot be considered as a “*woman’s problem*”. Opposite approaches will weaken the struggle and build a barrier to a stronger resistance of working class women in unity with male workers for the eradication of the material social conditions that give rise to the forms of relations which leave women in the position of a household slave and the oppressed gender. Yet forms of economic and social relations based on exploitation paves the way to slavery, both because of the conditioning that drag men as a gender into the trap of a patriarchal mentality against women and on the basis of class exploitation. Those positions that sabotage the unity in struggle of the female workers with the male

¹⁷ Also, the character of housework making woman the “*household slave*” will have to change. Among bourgeois and petty bourgeois circles there is a growing tendency to hire paid house-maids, cooks, cleaners, care givers, etc. Because of this change, the bounding and back-breaking character of housework becomes insignificant for the bourgeois women and their movement. This provides additional evidence for the argument that the woman question is more than a general problem around the issue of equal rights for men and women and that it has to be treated as a question of working women being freed from exploitation. Women who are reduced to being the oppressed gender and the ‘house maid’ are from different classes and although this enables united action around common demands, the fact that the emancipation of women as the oppressed gender is connected to the ending of the capitalist exploitation system, the bourgeois women who are in the minority would oppose this struggle as their interests are in the continuation of this system.

ones serve the interests of the capitalists and the bourgeois institutions.¹⁸

Changing this situation requires a struggle based on class unity of those oppressed and exploited sections of society, not influenced by the divisions of gender, nationality, religious beliefs, etc., a struggle which will end capitalist exploitation and patriarchal oppression.

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¹⁸ Strikes, acts of resistance or protests initiated by women workers are both possible and in some instances necessary in the workplaces where women workers are concentrated, just as the ones in Petrograd before the October Revolution or the ones in the USA in the early 20th century. The 8th of March as the International Working Women's Day is a result of such actions. There are examples from Russia, UK, Italy and Turkey where women workers initiated various acts of resistance. However, these actions are not getting the support of male workers.

United States

American Party of Labor

The UAW and CTU Strikes, and Their Lessons

Rank and File Forge Ahead, Moderate Leadership and Capitalist Government Pull Them Back

The past months saw some of the most significant labor strikes in recent U.S. history. Across the country, nearly 50,000 UAW workers struck against General Motors, demanding a clearer road to full-time employment for temps, pay improvements, and the restoration of shuttered factories. Just weeks later, over 35,000 teachers and support staff with the Chicago Teacher's Union and Service Employees International Union Local 73 went on strike to demand better pay for support staff, better support for students (nurses, counsellors, social workers, etc.), and a financial commitment away from police and towards students. The UAW struck for a remarkable and harrowing 40 days, and the CTU and SEIU strike lasted a record 11 days.

The number of workers who have gone on strike this year rivals the numbers of the golden age of organized labor in the United States in the early-20th century. It is not only the number of workers who march together that gives us inspiration, hope, and an occasion for reflection as working people in the United States, but also the nature of their demands and collective action. Each strike saw varying degrees of success, but there were two major takeaways for working class people, socialist organizers, and unionists, one encouraging, and one challenging.

Part-Time and Full-Time Workers Unite for Larger Demands

Both strikes saw full-time and part-time workers unite and fight for each other, a rare occurrence in the labor struggles of the mid to late-20th century. In an economy that increasingly fractures workers' lives into multiple part-time trades and jobs, the unity of part-time and full-time labor in both the UAW and CTU strikes should be an example to follow for subsequent strikes.

While Trump and his capitalist allies continue to brag about record-low unemployment, workers understand that this does not mean prosperity for working-class people. Instead, it means that people are

working for Uber or Lyft in highly exploitative environments, working several demanding part-time jobs, delivering for Amazon in inhumane conditions, and others, to pay the rent, support their families, and finance their educations. The UAW and CTU strikes mobilized thousands of workers to reckon this problem, and foster unity between full-time and part-time labor. The “I made it” mentality of full-time workers, and the reluctance of contingent workers to strike given their precarious employment, was in this powerful moment of working class unity, vanquished.

And in both cases, these united forces argued not simply for wage increases, but for fundamental changes in the way their workplace was run. The UAW fought for 40 days to see shuttered factories reopened, and for a more robust profit-sharing system to serve as proof against skyrocketing corporate salaries. The CTU struck for over a week to secure increased funding so that every school, despite its location and racial composition, would have a nurse, counsellor, and social worker, to decrease class size, and fight against bloating police budgets while schools suffer. Alex Fogue, a physics teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, told the Red Phoenix that he and his colleagues were striking to push City leadership to “invest in putting staff that heal our students (both emotionally and physically) and the staff that educate our students rather than incarcerate them. Our students deserve better. We are saying that the status quo policies and the austerity of the past are no longer acceptable.”

In both strikes, the goals leaped over the traditional demands of wage increases and better pensions. Organized workers in 2019, of all



types, ranks, and backgrounds, reckon that their problems have a systemic root. To succeed and win its demands, teachers in Chicago knew that they would have to unite with movements against police violence, racism, and oppression, leading ultimately to the CTU sponsoring and hosting the Conference to Refound the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression in November of 2019. Thus, both strikes laid out the path forward: unity among all kinds of workers, towards more general aims against austerity, racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry, and all forms of separatism and oppression.

Moderate Leaders and “Budget Realities”

Martin Tutwiler, a 42 year old UAW worker, said after the strike “that it lasted 40 days, and cost GM an estimated \$2 billion dollars, shows how hard a fight it was,” concluding ultimately, though, that “that there was some doubt whether it would be ratified, that it wasn’t ratified in every factory, indicates that the issues raised have not been fully settled.” The end of the UAW strike saw mixed feelings and reactions across the diverse body of UAW workers, with many feeling that leadership had compromised too much. The shuttered factories were not re-opened, and the part-time to full-time path was only marginally improved.

Facing real financial difficulty after 40 days off the job, the conflict over the leadership-endorsed contract underlines both the militancy that had developed, and the simple fact that the proposal would likely have been rejected in the previous weeks when rent and grocery payments did not cast as profound a shadow. Thus, as was seen in the #CountMeIn labor movement in New York City, a rift between leadership and members has developed within the UAW. Like most progressive people in the US, organized labor has now grown more militant than extant political institutions. In Chicago, too, while the new contract was hailed as “the most progressive” contract in CTU’s history, and it won key staff additions, aid for homeless students, and pay increases, it failed to achieve all of the strikers’ aims due to “budget realities” in the city of Chicago, in part due to the city’s enormous police budget.

Thus while these strikes showed us the way forward as organized workers in the United States, they also underlined the real obstacles the union movement will face as it moves forward. Even as part-time and full-time workers unite to demand institutional change, those institutions will resist us bitterly, and test our resolve in prolonged

strikes. So long as the capitalist class wields the purse strings and state power, the union movement will face an uphill battle. But the growth of that union movement and its increasingly radical demands, underlines the way to remove that obstacle.

The Task of Communists

Both strikes are an occasion for self-reflection and criticism from the Communist left in the United States. In the UAW strike particularly, Communists were slow to respond and support the strike in meaningful ways. This is in part due to the general skepticism amongst Communists regarding the potential of unionism in the US given the long history of the Democratic Party's co-opting of the labor movement, and also due to the particularly moderate UAW leadership.

But the failure and lack of action of moderates and democrats should not push the communist left away, but rather attract it. Where moderates tell a worker that the raise is generous, a Communist must organize and keep the fight alive for greater changes that will bring about real workplace democracy. Where concessions are praised as great victories, a communist must record and amplify the voices that say no.

And not only should Communists be willing to enter these spaces, they must be relevant in those spaces. They must provide financial support for striking workers, bring food, items, and solidarity of all kinds to the picket line. They must circulate papers that resonate with working class people and their concerns, and actively include and be a platform for their voices.

The growing rift between leadership and members should be for communists a wake-up call. The historic role of the Communist movement has been as a leader of the working-class rights movement, doing things no other political forces can, or will do. Fascists will and are attempting to make inroads in the labor movement – it falls to us to seize on the history of radical U.S. unionism, and the great courage and initiative of striking workers across the country today, in re-forging a diverse, active, militant, and powerful labor movement to openly confront growing fascist bigotry.

March 2020

Uruguay

Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Uruguay – PCMLU

The defeat of the Frente Amplio is the failure of the revisionist dogma

At the end of 2019, legislative and presidential elections were held in Uruguay, in which the “progressive” party of the Frente Amplio (Broad Front) contested for the government with a conglomerate of parties composed mainly of the traditional right, which in the second round formed the Multicolor Coalition.

The result of the first round of the elections, held on October 27, 2019, were as follows: Frente Amplio – 39.02%, National Party – 28.62%, Colorado Party – 12.34%, Cabildo Abierto – 11.04%, others (including leftist parties that were outside of the Frente Amplio) – 5.36%, null votes – 1.83%, blank votes – 1.79%.

The second round was between the presidential candidate of the Frente Amplio, Daniel Martínez (who came from the Socialist Party, a classic social-democratic party) and the presidential candidate of the National Party (a liberal, catholic party, now also linked to the evangelist lobby, which began in the early life of the Republic), Luis Lacalle Pou.

For the second round the three main parties behind the Frente Amplio and other small formed the Multicolor Coalition, supporting the presidential candidacy of Luis Lacalle Pou; the result of the runoff election held on November 29 was: Frente Amplio obtained 49.21% and the Multicolor Coalition won with 50.79%.

The rebound of the Frente Amplio in the second round was due, among other things, to the appearance on the scene of former Commander Manini Ríos, leader of the “Cabildo Abierto”, a party with a military origin, which argued that “progressivism” led to the advance of the right and fascism; however, it did not manage to reverse the adverse situation. One must make clear that voting in Uruguay is mandatory, so the results are representative of society.

There is no doubt that the defeat of the Frente Amplio after governing the country for fifteen years was part of the end of the cycle of progressive governments. But in the heterogeneity of the parties that call themselves progressive and grouped in the Sao Paulo Forum, the

Uruguayan Frente Amplio has particular characteristics that we believe deserve to be analyzed, as well as its electoral defeat.

The governments of the Frente Amplio

One of the Frente Amplio's first acts at the beginning of its first government in 2005 was to sign a letter of intent with the International Monetary Fund; this from the beginning made clear the course that it was going to follow. During this period and the following ones, praises to this and other international financial organizations became usual; it was rewarded with good evaluations by the credit rating agencies. This allowed it to maintain a rate of indebtedness and favorable terms and interests.

In the sphere of production, the concentration of land and turning it over to foreigners increased, the country's economy was consolidated as a producer of commodities that would later be sent to the large manufacturing centers, in a displacement line of parts of the production process, which in the world's division of labor assigned this region to be a producer of raw materials. This role was consolidated with the establishment of mega pulp plants, in which wood is processed to be shipped to China and then sold as paper to the world.

The tax policy of the Frente Amplio's governments was to increase the benefits for capital with the expansion of free-trade zones, specific measures to promote investments, reductions of taxes on profits and other measures aimed at attracting Foreign Direct Investment. On the other hand, the decrease in income created by these reductions in taxes on capital was made up for by increasing taxes on wages, pensions and consumption. For this, the governments not only used existing legislation, but also built an entire legal framework by creating laws such as for Promotion and Protection of Investments, Public-Private Association, and Outsourcing, among others.

In the private sector, and especially in the public sector, the governments of the Frente Amplio also increasingly turned over to private companies functions that were traditionally performed by the State. Another mechanism used was the Public-Private Association.

The Frente Amplio's governments continued the policies that have been operating since the military dictatorship, carrying out a set of changes in the productive apparatus, in labor relations, in the financial and tax system, according to the orientations of the main imperialist monopolies that, in association with the national bourgeoisie, dominate the economy.

Some additional aspects of the Frente Amplio's governments were the increase of the presence of the private sector in education; the promotion of a health-care system that, while it was made available to all, was based on a structure in which public and private providers received financing while competing with each other, in which the rich have access to better health care than workers. In regard to security, a policy of tougher penalties and strengthening of the repressive apparatus of the State was promoted, increasing the budget of the Ministry of the Interior, creating a huge militarized police force called the Republican Guard, investing in remote surveillance and empowering the army to carry out tasks of internal surveillance at the country borders.

Also the government strongly influenced the social movements, changing the main theme of the discussion from big changes in society to promoting what they called the "new agenda of rights". Thus through different institutions and NGOs, they promoted struggles of a liberal and petty-bourgeois character such as the legalization of marijuana, the consolidation of social movements such as the LGBTQ + movement, the recognition of women as a "minority", the whole social agenda that promotes women based on the reactionary conceptions of post-modernism and Queer Theory as an inclusive language, the concept of women as self-perceived individuals, among others.

Although the government had to give in on certain historical demands, as it partially did with abortion, decriminalizing it under certain circumstances, with the help of the opportunist's work of undermining, ideologically disarmed a big part of the social movement, which gave it a basis for presenting itself as a popular and left-wing option.

Revisionism in the creation and governments of the Frente Amplio

To understand the failure of the Frente Amplio governments, it is necessary to understand its origins.

The Frente Amplio was founded in 1971 with a strong influence of the revisionist Party that counted on a major force, especially in the labor movement. The Frente Amplio began as a weak tool for several reasons: the lack of a truly Marxist-Leninist party in its leadership, its heterogeneous class and ideological character and its purely petty-bourgeois utopian program.

After holding its 16th and 17th Congress in 1955 and 1958 respectively, the Communist Party of Uruguay confirmed its final turn to revisionism by accepting and adapting to national conditions the Khrushchevite theories of peaceful coexistence and the acceptance of the parliamentary road to socialism, among other opportunist theories that rejected an alleged "orthodox" past of the party.

But the overtly revisionist turn of the Khrushchevites of the CP (the revisionist Party) was based on a path that had already been opened by the influence of Browderism, a current propelled by Earl Browder, General Secretary of the CPUSA during the 1940s with decisive penetration into Latin America communist parties. He argued for the need to strengthen National Unity at any price, adding that the interests of the communists converged with those of society as a whole. He called for broad alliances in which the working class was included together with the exploiters.

In this way, all activity should be subjected to the institutions and frameworks established in the normal functioning of the bourgeois order, in which through gradual progress and at an indeterminate time, the pre-established reforms would lead to socialism:

The Communists foresee that the practical political aims they hold will for a long time be in agreement on all essential points with the aims of a much larger body of non-Communists, and that therefore our political actions will be merged in such larger movements.¹

Thus, starting in 1955, the revisionist CP would begin a series of policies aimed at the formation of fronts as an objective in itself, abandoning all kinds of programmatic principles. This led to all kinds of unprincipled alliances on all fronts, with a special effort to attract the Socialist Party, totally aligned to European social democracy, which it would praise and give all kinds of blank checks aimed at unity with it.

As a result of this turnaround, the Left Liberation Front (FIDEL) was born in 1962. This was formed without achieving the participation of the Socialist Party. That party built its own front, with the participation of leaders from the traditional parties, including the National Party (a sector historically representing the latifundists), as that of Ariel Collazo, a deputy who became infamous for giving the decisive

¹ Browder, Teheran, Our Path in War and Peace, 1944, Chapter XVI.

vote for the 1959 exchange and monetary reform promoted by the IMF.

After the economic crisis at the 1960s and the armed defeat of the MLN (Movement of National Liberation)-Tupamaros, the conditions for a greater unity of the so-called Uruguayan left began, whose most important result was the formation of the United Workers' Federation.

Despite what was previously described, added to some divisions in the left parties, the revolutionary movement continued to lack a clear political leadership, guided by a scientific, Marxist-Leninist ideology. This led to several defeats in a very heated atmosphere due to clearly anti-popular governments and various coups in the region.

Under these conditions, the historic year 1971 arrived, when on February 5, the formation of the Frente Amplio was announced. It proposed "to fraternally bring together the Colorados and Nationalists, Christian Democrats and Marxists, men and women of different ideologies, religious conceptions and philosophies, workers, students, teachers, priests and pastors, small and medium producers, industrialists and merchants, civilians and military, intellectuals and artists, in a word, all representatives of labor and culture, the legitimate spokespersons of the nation"².

With a call in which almost everyone was worth the maximum consideration, priests, pastors and industrial representatives of labor, the Frente Amplio was born.

To get an idea of its heterogeneity, we can highlight the presence of the revisionist CP, the Socialist Party, the Revolutionary Workers Party of a Trotskyist-Posadaist current, the Christian Democratic Party, self-proclaimed groups of Nationalists, other Batllists [supporters of José Batlle y Ordóñez, President from the Colorado Party in the early 1900s – *translator's note*], representatives of the MLN and also individuals. There were various officers – but not ordinary soldiers – among them General Seregni, known for leading various acts of repression against workers; Alba Roballo, a Catholic and fervent promoter of the candidacy of Gestido-Pacheco; Fasano, the business owner linked to Peronism, among others.

Without a Marxist-Leninist party and with a real mixture of petty-bourgeois ideologies, one could not expect much from its program.

² Frente Amplio, Declaration of the Formation, February 1971

On August 25, 1971, on the eve of the elections the Frente Amplio released a document that laid out its first 30 governmental measures.

The program was established with very good declarations of intentions, but as always happens with the petty bourgeoisie, without being accompanied by concrete measures that aimed at a structural change in the infrastructure and by moving away from concrete materiality, these good intentions end up being utopian.

In the first place, these measures that were designed for a rural economy, mainly an exporter of raw materials and agriculture products, they did not consider a change of course, but rather a strengthening of the existing economic regime.

In this sense, among the measures, there were no changes of any kind in industrial policy and therefore in the country's dependence on the imperialist powers, due to the backwardness of industry, which made the country dependent on equipment and means of production.

On the other hand, by prioritizing the alliance with the national bourgeoisie, the control of production was not among its objectives; instead control measures, optimization of resources, etc., were proposed that had already been implemented and failed under previous governments.

The program also did not propose the confiscation of capital, not only from the capitalists but also from the bankers and landowners who had been enriched by excessive speculation in that period.

This not only contradicts what we Marxist-Leninists propose as indispensable measures for the effective seizure of economic power after the revolution, but also contradicts the abstract national libera-



tion postulates that the revisionists defend; they propose the limitation of its possession of capital and means of production, but its source of power remains intact.

A clear example of what we are talking about is in the following paragraph:

The effectiveness of the right to work will emerge from agricultural and livestock policy, which ensures that the land will remain in the hands of the medium and small producers and of the workers in the countryside and that there will be an increase in production and productivity, the revival and intensive development of industry as a result of increased exports and domestic demand, the implementation of a plan of public works and of creating new jobs.³

As Marxist-Leninists, we know that at the stage of imperialism there is no place for the development of an independent capitalism since all markets and spheres of influence are divided up among the imperialist powers. Such was the experience of the national liberation struggles of the middle of the 20th century (except for the giant one, China) which, without economic development or clear leadership were condemned to dependence on one or another imperialist power.

As a consequence of all these factors, the evolution of events has once again shown the impossibility of the well-intentioned and developmental path and Frente Amplio was no exception.

This electoral front, with a strong influence of CP revisionism in its founding, would succeed in summarizing the struggles of the 1990s and the discontent of large sections of the masses with neoliberal policies, winning the government at the end of 2004 and obtaining a majority in parliament, a result that would be repeated in the following two electoral periods.

During the first two governments of the Frente Amplio (2005-2015), the conjuncture of high commodity prices and the influx of significant Foreign Direct Investment, which allowed it to count on significant income, made it possible to carry out social policies and increase budgets, decrease unemployment and increase real wages compared to the crisis experienced by the country in 2002.

It is clear that these positive numbers were not due to a change in policy but to a period of the restructuring of capital, which led to sig-

³ Frente Amplio, first 30 measures of government, August 1971

nificant investments of monopolies throughout the region and to drive up prices of raw materials, mainly for China.

The context of the first two periods in which Frente Amplio governed made it possible to strengthen opportunism, which sought through different approaches to justify the course taken by the government of which they formed a part.

With great creativity, the revisionist CP of Uruguay insisted on the thesis of the existence of two blocs in contention, on the one hand, that of imperialism accompanied by its local agents, also known as the “bloc of power” and on the other, the “counter-hegemonic” bloc, which would be an “expression of the great national majorities, of all the working people with a center in the working class as the most exploited sector... [which] objectively includes all those with interests opposed to imperialism, including sectors of the bourgeoisie not directly associated with transnational capital” whose fundamental political tools would be the Frente Amplio and the trade union federation PIT-CNT (Inter-Union Workers’ Plenary – National Workers’ Convention)⁴. With these ideas it dragged many of the reformist parties and organizations behind it.

One should keep in mind that the Frente Amplio called for the unity between the working classes and the exploiters, with the prospect of gradually achieving National Liberation, in fact denying the existence of the class struggle at the present stage.

Someone might think that today there are progressive sectors within the Uruguayan bourgeoisie and that the governments of this coalition could confront imperialism. We do not believe this, nor, it seems, does the CP of Uruguay regarding governments that it defended and promoted, about which it states:

The possibilities for further social and economic advances in our country and in the face of the world economic crisis are hampered by some aspects of economic policy that can be summarized as follows: maintaining and not touching international reserves, the implementation of a fiscal policy that does not tax the wealth of big capital, the repayment of the debt, and the excessive promoting of foreign direct investment.⁵

It adds:

⁴ PCU, Document and General Resolution of the 30th Congress, 2013, Page 4.

⁵ Ibid., page 14.

The above-mentioned characteristics of economic policy have enabled the acceleration of a process of concentration of wealth and foreign ownership of land.⁶...

The Uruguayan GDP is growing at exceptional levels and most of the population has seen improvements in their living conditions. But the distribution of wealth is regressive and the weaknesses of our economy in international relations are increasing. The increase in wealth created and accumulated is not accompanied by a similar increase in the household income of working people. The surplus value appropriated by the ruling classes is growing.⁷

Revisionism knew how to recognize the existence of a government that kept production relations unchanged, that increased the levels of exploitation of the working class and that not only maintained but also deepened the dependence on imperialism. Substantive reforms, which are highly questionable, accompanied by fictitious gains to sell them to the workers and juicy positions in state agencies were the pillar that sustained them within a clearly anti-popular government.

Those who do not know the political reality of Uruguay in the last 15 years may think that the role of opportunism was that of critical support, oversight and promoter of the initiatives of the Frente Amplio's governments. But far from that, its complicity with the government was total: they voted for all of its laws, tried to stop any expression of movement contrary to the interests of the government and completely demobilized the mass organizations which had the ability to lead, justifying cuts in wages, privatization, etc.

Many examples make clear the policy of unity with the bourgeoisie, using the widespread slogan launched by the trade union movement where the ultimate goal of all their "struggles" was the defense of jobs and the right to "negotiate" with chambers of commerce without any demands for the benefit of the workers.

All this shows the non-existence of the process of changes that they claimed to promote.

From any rational point of view, one cannot consider the program described as a model. Even the revisionist CP itself admitted it was limited, on which the whole path of emancipation and socialist con-

⁶ Ibid., page 15.

⁷ Ibid., page 16.

struction was based, or that someone would think it could rely on these forces to advance towards socialism. Only those who rely on outdated dogmas can deny reality so clearly; only those who have completely lost sight of the necessity of the Proletarian Revolution and have the clear and sworn objective of fighting Marxism-Leninism, to become an appendage of the bourgeoisie, can defend and call for national unity so blatantly.

The third government of the Frente Amplio and its electoral defeat

The Frente Amplio won its third government in November 2014, in which commodities prices were stabilized, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows were reduced, the extraordinary boom period ended, the return to normalcy put in the foreground the inherent contradictions of the system. The third government of the Frente Amplio was a break with the previous ones: the fiscal possibilities shrunk and it tended to, place the burden on the workers, raising taxes on wages, raising the rates of public services companies in order to increase the State's income, cutting public spending on education and health care. Despite these measures, the fiscal deficit increased. Unemployment also grew, wages were no longer indexed to inflation, precarious and informal jobs increased.

Our Party stated the following about this in May 2019:

The latest official data confirm that the economic boom period has finally come to an end. In 2018, Uruguay's GDP grew by 1.6%, and in the first four years of the current government (2015 to 2018) the average growth was 1.57%, a marked difference from the average of the first two governments of the Frente Amplio, in which the GDP grew on average 5.4% each year.

The decrease in value created by Uruguayan capitalism limited the policy of class conciliation promoted by the Frente Amplio while they were the government. This is also reflected in the data:

The purchasing power of wages, which between 2005 and 2014 grew at an average of 4.25% each year, from 2015 onwards grew at a rate of 1.56% and specifically in 2018 it grew only 0.18%. If we add to this the 60.000 jobs lost in the current period, the total salary of the country fell considerably.

From the side of capital, the profit rate has been falling steadily since 2013. While between 2007 and 2015 the capitalists rein-

vested in the country 11% of their own profit, in addition to replacing the raw material and the amortization of the capital already invested, in 2017 and 2018 that amount became negative. This meant that capital in Uruguay was not even investing enough to reproduce the economic cycle, much less to increase it.

We are once again facing the limits of capitalist development in a country dependent on imperialism.

This prelude to a crisis is a regional situation, in which capital seeks to recover the rate of profit that always occurs in the economic cycle: destruction of the productive forces (closing of companies, absorption of the smallest by the largest), and the low general cost of labor power.

The direct consequences are a greater concentration of capital and a worsening of the living conditions of the workers.

The State, with its class character, functions for the needs of capital in periods of crisis.

In this sense, in Argentina and Brazil, where “progressives” have been removed from the government, strong capital adjustment measures against the working class are already being applied.

If in Uruguay it has not yet been applied openly, it is because our country is in an election year, and openly aggressive measures against the people would disrupt any chance of the Frente Amplio being reelected.

However, the government of the Frente Amplio has been applying adjustment measures underhandedly, which are not mentioned in the official discourse, counting for this on the strong complicity of the union and student leaders, without which it would be impossible for the government to apply the measures⁸.

This aggravation of the economic situation and the loss of support suffered by the Frente Amplio’s government resulted in an increase in the mobilization of many popular sectors; in particular the struggle for the public education budget with thousands of young people and teachers in the streets and the environmental struggle, among others, opened possibilities for us -Marxists-Leninists to grow in the midst of the mobilization.

A favorable situation is opening for the growth of revolutionary options, but what is striking about the electoral result is that the “left”,

⁸ PCMLU, CC report of May 2019.

which we can call revolutionary, or at least is not organizationally tied to the Frente Amplio and continues to raise the banners of the revolution, suffered a major setback. Despite the increased mobilization of the social movement, the degrees of discontent of the masses, the Frente Amplio did not suffer a loss of electoral support from the "left".

For us it is of strategic importance to achieve degrees of unity at the electoral, trade union, etc. level, among the sectors of the left side outside Frente Amplio. With this premise, the organizations that already exist and have political experience must not be ignored; they must be considered and evaluated.

Having said that, we believe that it is necessary to have a fraternal, honest and clear debate, to study the reasons for the setbacks, stagnation and the little growth of the spectrum of these forces.

For this our Party proposed in December 2019:

In the three main parties on the left outside the Frente Amplio, the "26th of March", the "PCR" and the "PT"⁹ show some deviations that need to be analyzed and where perhaps we can find the reasons for the stagnation or decline of these parties.

The "26th of March" has a practice that tends to isolate themselves from the social struggles, the victory that gave them access to parliament in the past elections gave them an impetus to establish their own union federation, the Trade Union Federation of Uruguay (CSGU). The CSGU was born from the impulse of a party and a small group of militants; it is not the result of a process of debate and experience of the masses that decided on the need for a union federation separate from the PIT-CNT.

Over the years, its status as a totally marginal federation has remained unchanged. It must be added that the "26th of March" has members in unions that belong to the PIT-CNT, which gives the idea that this party does not have a defined line of how to work in the labor movement. But the general policy they promote is to isolate themselves from the workers struggles in the unions that are part of the PIT-CNT.

On the other hand, both the PT and the PCR have decided to work within the unions that are part of the PIT-CNT, both with

⁹ The "26th of March" party comes from the Tupamaros tradition, the Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR) is a party of Maoist orientation and the Workers' Party (PT) is of Trotskyist orientation.

the orientation of tailing the masses and the struggles they themselves wage without taking into account that they are oriented by the opportunist leaderships, which mark their perspective and profile.

This orientation puts them at the tail of the opportunist leaderships, without being able in many cases to develop their own policies; they remain glued to the struggles that the leadership adopted, and they hide the revolutionary perspective that they claim to have, refusing to wage an ideological struggle that puts the cardinal interests of the proletariat on the table.

And if they do something that resembles this ideological struggle, they always do it with the endorsement of the official leadership, always within the framework of what is acceptable and never denouncing or unmasking the role of opportunism. In this way, they end up being an acceptable opposition, where all their work and effort does not lead to a growth of the consistent and class positions in the labor movement.

These orientations may bring us closer to an answer to the reason why, in a favorable context, these parties could not develop, but above all, it gives us an idea of the basis on which principles we must promote our work as a Party in the social movement and particularly in the labor movement¹⁰.

The Frente Amplio, due to the shortcomings and weaknesses of the Marxist-Leninist party or its abilities, manages to drag most of the left sectors behind it, on a discourse of the need to “stop the right”. But the defeat inflicted a hard blow to it, its governments did not lead to a better society or to socialism, but to a government of the traditional right-wing that takes office in a country with a complicated economic situation.

The new stage

The stage that is opening up, with opportunism outside of the government and with the Multicolor Coalition in it, demands that all parties analyze the concrete situation and take measures to adapt to the new reality. Most of the left parties that are independent of the Frente Amplio, except for the PCMLU, have chosen to stick to the agenda of opportunism.

On the current situation, in December 2019 we proposed:

¹⁰ PCMLU, CC report of December 2019.

There are no indicators that the Luis Lacalle government will deliver strong adjustment or shock measures. First, because the outgoing FA government carried out much of this work already, and second, because seeing what happened in Brazil and Argentina, they may not want to follow the same path if they want to remain in the government.

The main concern of public discussion has been the fiscal deficit; for this reason is probable that it will continue the policy of zero increase in state spending, decrease in the number of public employees and increase in outsourcing and construction work by Public Private Partnership.

Regarding competitiveness, the current government has already eliminated indexing of wages to inflation for broad sectors, and a significant devaluation that, although it is expected to continue, will not have a strong impact.

In other words, we are not facing a scenario of big adjustment measures, and therefore, of a resistance of the working class to it, where mobilizations and struggles must exist despite the opportunist leadership.

The role of the opportunist leadership also does not seem to be to promote mobilization and struggle in this period, and that should not surprise us: the parties that currently lead the unions are not opportunists during the governments of the Frente Amplio and revolutionaries during other governments; on the contrary, the fundamental content of their policy remains unchanged. And in the same report we said further:

As a Party we have the challenge of winning the trust of the workers and popular sectors in the unions, the neighborhoods and the elections. We must become a real alternative in order to lead the mass organizations, to govern, and the Party must ideologically fight to put socialism as an alternative to capitalism as a real possibility.

To push forward the struggles, to create the necessary experience of the masses, is a condition for them to understand a large part of the postulates that we are putting forward; for this reason it is our Party's orientation to join and participate in the struggles that express the needs and demands of the workers and popular

sectors, but with our own policy, with a Marxist-Leninist vision¹¹.

The loss of the government by opportunism is a hard blow; all its predictions were smashed, a new favorable scenario opens up for the revolutionary forces to rebuild, organize and strengthen themselves, and our Party will decisively contribute to this process.

March 2020

¹¹ Ibid.

Venezuela

Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Venezuela

The Capitalist Crisis, the Virus and the Class Struggle

The intensity of the media action, as well as the real expansion of the coronavirus, have served to conceal the presence of the much announced new economic crisis of capitalism that, once again, combines the general crisis with a new cyclical crisis in a single framework that will surely lead to depression, more wars and revolutions.

For almost two years, many economists have predicted the current crisis, which we affirm is not the product of any virus; it is the natural consequence of the development of capitalism and its periodic expression, at the same level as the phase of recovery and boom.

In the framework of such difficult scenarios that threaten the stability and lives of millions of people, without work, without income, without health care or social security, there are two options for the exploited: to work to overthrow the capitalist governments by fighting for people's democracy and socialism, or to bow their head and stoically accept the reality of exploitation and death under the yoke of the bourgeois with their murderous policies, where it is more important to save the capitalist economic system than the lives of thousands of people

The masters of capital put themselves in the safety of private islands and bunkers and activate all the mechanisms of their high-tech private health-care system, while the proletariat is exposed to certain death for thousands, since it does not have the money to eat, to take preventive measures, and even less to pay for adequate health care to face a pandemic that maybe a product of the genetic manipulation of microorganisms in the laboratories of the imperialist powers, as well as the lack of correct measures to prevent its spread.

The living conditions of the popular majorities are worsened by the existence of privatized, exclusive and bourgeois health-care systems that leave out those who do cannot pay high premiums to the financial monopolies and insurance companies. In the same way, low wages and shortages of food and medicines, have terrible consequences for the workers, who are the most affected worldwide.

In some countries where governments have privileged industry, tourism, and commerce to guarantee the capitalist productive apparatus; the number of people infected and killed by Covid-19 has risen, while in others, where there has been a more rational policy, even in the capitalist framework; better control has been possible, even if their class commitment does not break with the private health-care, food and transportation system in order to expropriate them and place them free of charge at the service of the majority. This shows that despite greater flexibility and social commitment of some governments, reformism falls short before the demands of a society attacked by a complex pandemic and an economic crisis of great magnitude.

It is important to state that the imperialist mafia that controls the US government, and other countries are taking advantage of the situation to strike the proletariat while threatening other peoples. This is the case of Venezuela, a country that, in addition to fighting against years of imperialist aggression by the US-EU bloc, is now affected by the coronavirus, and to complete the picture of harsh conditions, it is threatened with direct military aggression by the government of Donald Trump.

Under these conditions of struggle against imperialism and for the defense of the self-determination of the peoples, we of the CC of the PCMLV call on the democratic fighters and revolutionaries of the world to be alert to the latest threats wielded by the chieftains of imperialism.

Our party, together with the Marxist-Leninists and the most conscious elements of society, are determined to defend our sovereignty under whatever conditions necessary, for which we once again appre-



ciate the active solidarity with this people.

In these complex times we reaffirm the effort of our party and its organizations to consolidate its link with the oppressed majorities, assessing as correct, for this purpose, the policy of critical support with our own demands, defined and applied in the midst of the dialectical nature of the struggle.

Today more than ever, it is an internationalist task of the first order to confront with all possible forces the common enemy of humanity, imperialism and the main danger expressed in the US-EU imperialist bloc. Therefore, we have tried to contribute to this, bearing in mind the political level that the people have shown.

The intention demonstrated by the organized sector of the popular masses to defend their sovereignty and confront this new situation of aggression, creating adequate spaces to meet specific needs, is a basis for our daily work. There, under these conditions, we Marxist-Leninists are working, trying to take advantage of all the resources to promote revolutionary education and action. This has been accompanied by signs of active solidarity with a people who are resisting and fighting in very particular conditions of imperialist aggression.

Every day our party is more aware that only the working class and the peasantry have the will to fight to the end and in any scenario. That is why in the real, specific conditions of Venezuela we are working to accumulate forces, facing the multiple aggressions in progress, together with the people, recognizing the need to defend the right to self-determination within the framework of the concrete struggle. We are acting patiently and systematically to raise the consciousness of the masses until coming, through concrete experience and analysis, to understand the inconsistencies of social democracy and modern revisionism. They will not be able to take up the irreconcilable character of the class struggle at the national and international level.

In the Venezuela of today, with great obstacles and various limitations, we are advancing, maintaining our activity in the effort of all our members and allies. We are always ready to maintain our activity in a complex environment of blockade, economic crisis, threats of aggression, presence of mercenaries, quarantine. We are making efforts to consolidate our presence in every region of our country, in the various labor sectors, mainly among the proletariat and the revolutionary strata, as well as among the consistent fighters worldwide.

The Marxist-Leninist leadership of Venezuela affirms its willingness to fight as well as the duty to carry the transformative commitment to the end.

The threats of aggression will be faced decisively so that the people who resist and fight will place themselves at the head of the broad masses, raising the red flags with the hammer and sickle that advances in the process of educating and educating itself despite material limitations, without ever losing the reflex to lead the advance towards socialism, promoting the application of true revolutionary measures and demonstrating its capabilities in the midst of a harsh reality.

**Socialism Can Only Be Built with the Worker-Peasant Alliance
in Power and the People in Arms**

CC of the PCMLV
Venezuela, April 2020