

Workers of the World, Unite!

Unity & Struggle

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Marxist-Leninist Parties
and Organizations



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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| ICMLPO..... | 5 |
| Honor and Glory to Comrade Raul Marco International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations | |
| Bolivia..... | 7 |
| Their "Democracy" and Ours Revolutionary Communist Party of Bolivia (PCB) | |
| Brazil..... | 12 |
| The Betrayal by the Communist Party of China (CPC) of the Working Class and the 1949 Revolution Revolutionary Communist Party (PCR) | |
| Burkina Faso..... | 25 |
| Solidarity with the People's Struggles in the United States against Impunity for Police Violence and Racist Crimes Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta | |
| Denmark..... | 30 |
| The Strengthening of the European Union on the Backs of the Working Class Workers Communist Party, APK | |
| Dominican Republic..... | 36 |
| An Experience in the International Communist Movement On the 40th Anniversary of the Communist Party of Labor Contributions to the Critical and Optimistic Assessment Communist Party of Labor (PCT) | |
| Ecuador..... | 42 |
| Modern Revisionism, Direct Enemy of the Revolution and Socialism Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador – PCMLE | |
| France..... | 63 |
| "For a Revolutionary Rupture with the System" Communist Party of the Workers of France | |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Germany | 74 |
| “Covid and the Question of Value” | |
| Organization for the Construction of a Communist Workers’ Party of Germany | |
| India | 80 |
| Covid 19 and the Working Classes | |
| Revolutionary Democracy | |
| Italy | 92 |
| The Coronavirus in Italy, from a Class Point of View | |
| Communist Platform – for the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy | |
| Mexico | 105 |
| Two Years of the Oligarchic Regime of the 4T in Mexico | |
| Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist) | |
| Spain | 115 |
| The Road to the Revisionist Abyss: Notes on the Historical Experience of the Soviet Union | |
| Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist) – PCE(ml) | |
| Tunisia | 122 |
| Friedrich Engels: the Journey of a Great Thinker and an Outstanding Activist | |
| Party of the Workers of Tunisia | |
| Turkey | 144 |
| Engels as an Organiser and Propagandist | |
| Party of Labour (EMEP) | |
| Uruguay | 164 |
| What Was and Is the Cuban Process | |
| Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Uruguay – PCMLU | |
| Venezuela | 187 |
| In Venezuela the Struggle Advances in the Midst of Contradictions | |
| Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Venezuela – PCMLV | |

Honor and Glory to Comrade Raul Marco

Comrade Raúl Marco has died and we Marxist-Leninist communists of the world express our sorrow. A courageous life, for decades dedicated to the struggle for the revolution and socialism, for the ideals of communism, has been lost. A persevering internationalist, a tireless worker for the unity of the communists at the international level, has gone.

Comrade Raul Marco carried out a persevering work for the construction, establishment and development of the Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist), PCE (m-l). From that trench, from the columns of *Vanguardia Obrera* and the international magazines *Theory and Practice* and *Unity and Struggle*, he expressed his firm adherence to principles, his eagerness to apply them in the concrete conditions of Spain and on an international scale.

The PCE (ml) was forged in the fight for the immediate interests of the working class and peoples of Spain, in the consistent practice of proletarian internationalism, in the head-on fight against Franco's fascism, in the construction and leadership of the Antifascist Revolutionary and Patriotic Front, FRAP; in the ideological battles in defense of Marxism-Leninism and the fight without quarter against the opportunists and revisionists, against the traitors; he contributed significantly to the formation of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations, ICMLPO.

The capitalists and reactionaries of Spain tried by all means to destroy, divide and dismantle the PCE (ml), they persecuted it, imprisoned and tortured prominent members and murdered prominent anti-fascist fighters, but each blow, each factionalist attempt failed over and over again, it crashed against the principles and their defenders, the Marxist-Leninist leaders and members.

In 1990 a small group of opportunists and traitors gave a devious blow, attacked the leadership of the Party and from there dissolved it by decree. It was a vain attempt; Raul Marco and other consistent Marxist Leninists continued the struggle and after some years rebuilt the PCE (m-l), restored for the workers and peoples of

Spain the proletarian revolutionary vanguard that continued to develop the struggle for socialism.

The International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations, ICMLPO, inclines the red banners of communism to the memory of Comrade Raul Marco, expresses solidarity with the leadership and members of the Communist Party of Spain (m-l), with his dear family, and especially with Comrade Lola.

The example of Comrade Raul will accompany us in the new battles that we will wage in our countries to organize and make the revolution.

Glory to Comrade Raul Marco

October 2020

***Coordinating Committee of the International Conference of
Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations***

Their "Democracy" and Ours

The fascist oligarchic coup d'état of November 2019 ruptured the constitutional order in Bolivia; the political representatives of the bankers and agro-industrialists usurped state power. They came to the Palacio Quemado (the government palace – *translator's note*) with the bible and the tricolor flag; they said that “God had returned to the palace” and that they had “restored democracy”. In the ten months of the “restored democracy” the de facto regime has clearly demonstrated its understanding of the term – the massacres of Sacaba and Senkata marked the beginning of its misrule. Until now it has maintained its open war against the “savages” (that is, the workers, peasants, communists, leftists, etc.) as its line of action.

The democracy that the illegitimate government advocates means oblivion, collective amnesia: Leopoldo Fernandez, former Prefect of the Department of Pando¹, as the one politically responsible for the Porvenir massacre (September 11, 2008, with more than 19 dead according to the report of UNASUR) was freed of all charges against him; Branko Marinkovic, former leader of the Pro Santa Cruz Civic Committee, the main defendant in the case of separatist terrorism of the so-called half moon (2006-2008), has not only been acquitted of the accusations against him but is also Minister of Economy of the regime. Many of those responsible for the privatization of our national companies between 1985 and 2005 today hold important positions in the public sector.

The paramilitary groups that go out with weapons of terror, knives and baseball bats to beat peasants are defenders of their “democracy”. So are the undercover agents who throw tear gas grenades in the midst of the election campaign. They justify the wave of terror unleashed because they must defend their “democracy” at all costs. Their “democracy” twice postponed the general elections, agreed upon and excluding, under police and military control, with

¹ In the north Amazon region of the country, bordering Peru and Brazil.

the Supreme Electoral Tribunal under the command of a US agent². Their “democracy” is nothing more than the freedom to handed out natural resources to the highest bidder, to privatize state assets, and to deprive more than 3 million children and adolescents of the right to education.

Today the regime appears to be shaking, with the resignation of three key ministers of the president’s cabinet and the public announcements of the two main political parties (Democrats and National Unity) of the Añez alliance that they were never part of the government and that they are not responsible for its acts. Within hours of the resignation, two of the cabinet's strongmen undertook emergency trips to the United States to meet with the OAS, the Inter-American Development Bank and the State Department. After a temporary unity of the bourgeois and oligarchic factions of the country to carry out the coup, they have begun internal struggles for the hegemony of political power. But they are clear about the objective that unites them – in no way to allow the popular bloc to get close to state power. The contradiction between factions of the bourgeoisie, between the agro-industrial faction of the East and the mining faction of the West, is dialectical; they will close ranks to prevent the rise of the popular movement.

The Experience of the August Mobilizations

After the coup of November 2019, the Legislative Assembly under the control of the MAS-IPSP (Movement for Socialism–Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples) reached an agreement with the de facto regime; it negotiated in spite of the blood spilled in the streets for a new call for elections. The conditions of the call guaranteed the participation of all the parties registered for the 2019 elections, that is, both the MAS-IPSP and the small groups of the right kept their registration and the registration of new political organizations was prevented. The elections called for May 4 were postponed for the first time under the pretext of the

² Salvador Romero, head of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, according to U.S. diplomatic cables, consulted with the U.S. Embassy when he held the same position in 2004-2008; he was a high official in the Democratic National Institute in Honduras, charged with monitoring two observed elections for fraud in that country.

COVID-19 pandemic until September 6. However, in August the regime declared a second postponement for October 18.

The second postponement caused a reaction in the leaderships of the Pact of Unity³ and in the Central Obrera Boliviana [Bolivian Workers Federation] who called for national mobilizations demanding respect for the elections of September 6. The mobilizations, marches and roadblocks that spread throughout the country were developing their political conception and the initial slogan of respect for the elections in September became a cry of: Añez Out! The regime tried to provoke conflicts by taking a caravan of oxygen trucks escorted by tanks throughout the country, at all the points of the blockade the people mobilized to allow the oxygen to pass through without falling into government provocations. The paramilitary groups, in complicity with the government, attacked and assaulted the blockade points.

In the midst of the conflict, the declarations of Evo Morales from Buenos Aires, asking the mobilized people to retreat and not demand the resignation of Añez so as not to obstruct the electoral process, deepened the rift between the union bureaucracies and the rank-and-file of the popular organizations. The final outcome of the conflict was marked by another negotiation between the assembly members of the MAS-IPSP and the regime, endorsing the date of October 18. This negotiation was characterized as treason by the leaders of the Pact of Unity and the Central Obrera Boliviana, who at the same time called for demobilization.

Once again the people: the workers, peasants, young people and women stood up, took to the streets to fight and confronted state and paramilitary repression. And once again Parliament negotiated with the regime behind the backs of the people. There are important lessons of the August days of struggle, that only the mobilized people can overthrow this regime; the popular organizations that have been co-opted by the bureaucrats must be revived, the popular movement can and must organize its legitimate defense against state repression and the paramilitary groups. There is no other way: Only the people can save the people!

³ The main peasant organizations of the country, which initially formed the Political Instrument that became the MAS-ISPS.

Our Proposal: Build a Popular Democratic and National Liberation Alternative

Faced with the “democracy” of the oligarchy, we have a clear proposal – popular democracy. The popular democracy that we are fighting for is not limited to voting every five years in rigged elections, it is to empower the working people to decide in every way from the factory, the neighborhood, the community up to the State. For us there is no democracy as long as there is a handful of families who are the owners of the country, of the great tracts of land, of the mines, the banks, the factories, the media. Even less so when these bosses throw hundreds and thousands of workers into the street in the midst of a pandemic, sentencing them to die of hunger. Bolivia will not be democratic or free as long as we do not overcome the relations of national oppression between the dominant Bolivian nationality and the indigenous peoples and nations; these relations are most visible in the racism that penetrates the depths of our socio-economic structure.

For us, popular democracy also means the need for true national sovereignty in the face of the plundering of our resources and imperialist robbery. Our proposal is that the October 2003 Agenda must be fulfilled – a true nationalization and industrialization of our natural resources. We propose the urgent need for a planned economy under the control of the workers, so that our country stops being an exporter of raw materials. National sovereignty is also expressed in food sovereignty, that our countryside is not destined to create a



genetically modified agro-industry for export but to produce the food that the people can consume.

We are fighting for a country in which we workers have a comprehensive social security system, which guarantees access to health care, decent retirement, housing and recreation. We are fighting because we believe that education, culture and sports should not be privilege of those who can pay for them, but rather are a human right. We believe that in a new society we must root out the sexist and patriarchal structures that are expressed in the inequalities between women and men, the violence that reaches the level of femicide and the criminalization of the abortion.

The popular democratic and national liberation alternative that we are building has a clear objective – scientific socialism, the first phase of communism, because the type of society that we are fighting for is not possible as long as exploitation and oppression remain. The building of this alternative must be carried out in all aspects, ready to show the difference between our class proposal and the decadence and misery offered by the bourgeoisie.

We communists defend and will defend the right of the people to go to the polls so that the vast majority can decide on the future of the country, and we denounce the supporters of a coup to take power through a new electoral fraud or by other means. The political project of national liberation, of the working class, the peasants and the peoples of Bolivia is not limited to an election; it is a project of profound transformation of the inequalities that exist in our country. The conscious building takes place in each strike, in each blockade, in each march, in each assembly in which little by little the popular movement regains its class independence and strength. Because the campaign of fear and terror unleashed by the coup government cannot take away from us the hope of changing our country, of building a new society – scientific socialism.

October 2020

The Betrayal by the Communist Party of China (CPC) of the Working Class and the 1949 Revolution

One of the lies that the bourgeoisie and its agents in the workers' movement spread to confuse the workers is that China is a communist country and that the party in power is also communist. In this way, they try to hold the Marxist-Leninists responsible for the evils that exist in that country.

But China is not and never was a country with a communist regime. Yes, on October 1, 1949, there was a revolution led by the Communist Party of China (CPC) that established a People's Republic, whose goal was to build a socialist society. However, due to the betrayal of the Central Committee of the Party and of the Army, the repression of the real communists, and various reforms carried out since 1978, capitalism was restored. Today, in China the private ownership of the means of production, the exploitation of one human being by another, predominates. With the full support of the State the big bourgeoisie exploits the working class; there is a growing financialization of the economy and of foreign trade dominated by large national and foreign monopolies. The market and the incessant search for profit determine the prices of commodities. In short, the relations of production in China are capitalist.

To hide from the working class the fact that the bourgeoisie is the class that really benefits from economic growth, the CPC traitors and the Khrushchevites of the 21st century are continuing to call the ruling party in China communist and the current capitalist regime in the country "market socialism" or "socialism with Chinese characteristics of a new era".

But the CPC is a communist party only in name. In fact, it is a revisionist party of the worst kind, which betrayed communism, the ideals and principles of Marxism-Leninism, the proletarian revolution and, as its last congresses approved, it is guided by the "triple representativeness, the theory of Deng Xiaoping and the thought of

Xi Jinping”, all presented as a “continuity and development of Marxism-Leninism”.

Thus, in the same way that there was a Socialist Revolution in Russia, in 1917 and today there is not a single person in the world who considers Russia to be a socialist country or who says that the corrupt and reactionary Vladimir Putin is a communist, it will not take long for the CP of China to be rejected by the Chinese working masses and the world proletariat.

Class struggle

Although the situation is sad and shameful, facts are facts: the leaders of the Chinese CP sold themselves to the bourgeoisie and the financial oligarchy that dominates the world economy. Corrupted, they despised the working class and peasants and became servants of capital. Although deplorable, such events teach the true communists and revolutionaries that the struggle between classes continues to develop sharply, even after the seizure of power by the proletariat. As Dostoevsky says, the devil does not sleep.

Thus, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explained in detail in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.... Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat”.

So that there is no doubt, in a note by Engels to the English edition of the *Manifesto* of 1888, Engels clarified why these two classes are in hostile camps: “By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live.”

Furthermore, as Lenin pointed out, the bourgeoisie, after being defeated, multiplies its resistance tenfold and counts on the support of international capital: “The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by its overthrow (even if only in one country), and whose power lies not only in the strength of international capital, in

the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie, but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of small production... small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate war of life and death, a war demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, indomitableness and unity of will.” (V.I. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*.)

What is a communist party?

After 1978, after the violent repression of the leaders and members who supported the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping became the head of the Central Committee of the CPC and implemented the economic reforms that led to the restoration of capitalism in China. Some people are reluctant to acknowledge this reality; in the end the Chinese party continues to call itself communist and to display the hammer and sickle on its banner. However, the color of the cat is not important, nor is the name by which the cat is known. Here in our country we have the example of the PC do B, also called the Communist Party of Brazil. It continues to use the red flag with the hammer and sickle – at least at its congresses – but it abandoned the communist ideals, the Marxist theory of the class struggle and went on to defend the private ownership of the means of production and glorify the bourgeois Army.

The question of the name of the Party is so important that in 1918 it led Lenin to defend the name change of the party in Russia. Indeed, until the 7th Congress, held from March 6 to 8, 1918, the Bolshevik Party was called the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP). With the betrayal of the opportunist social democratic leaders of the Second International, Lenin considered it timely to demarcate the differences with social democracy and defended the need for the Bolshevik Party to change its name to the Russian Communist Party: “the most important argument in favour of changing the name of the Party is that up to now the old official socialist parties in all the leading European countries have still not got rid of their intoxication with social-chauvinism and social-patriotism that led to the complete collapse of European official socialism during the present war, so that up to now almost all official socialist parties have been a real hindrance to the working-class

revolutionary socialist movement, a real encumbrance to it. And our Party, which at the present time undoubtedly enjoys the greatest sympathy of the masses of the working people of all countries—our Party must make the most decisive, sharp, clear and unambiguous statement that is possible to the effect that it has broken off connections with that old official socialism, for which purpose a change in the name of the Party will be the most effective means.” (V.I. Lenin, Report on the Review of the Programme and on Changing the name of the Party, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27).

Thus, to decide whether or not a party is communist, its name is not enough; It is necessary to analyze its composition, its program, its practice (in the country and the world) and its theory.

As we know, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin always fought to build a revolutionary party of the working class in opposition to the other parties that defended private ownership of the means of production and class conciliation. The composition of this party is not, therefore, something secondary, after all, "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie to-day, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class" (Marx and Engels, op. cit.).

Lenin also defined the communist party as the party of the working class: “We are the party of a class, and therefore *almost the entire class* (and in times of war, in a period of civil war, the entire class) should act under the leadership of our Party, should adhere to our Party as closely as possible” (V.I. Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*).

In reality, the true communists never stopped fighting class conciliation and were extremely uncompromising against the presence of petty-bourgeois, opportunist and revisionist elements within the party. Let us look at what Lenin wrote about the fundamental conditions for the victory of the Russian Socialist Revolution:

“With reformists, Mensheviks, in our ranks it is *impossible* to be victorious in the proletarian revolution, it is *impossible* to defend it. That is obvious in principle, and it has been strikingly confirmed by the experience of both Russia and Hungary.... In Russia, difficult situations have arisen *many times*, when the Soviet regime would *most certainly* have been overthrown had Mensheviks, reformists and petty-bourgeois democrats remained in our Party....” (V.I. Lenin, *False Speeches on Freedom*, quoted in Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*).

We repeat: "the Soviet regime would most certainly have been overthrown had Mensheviks, reformists and petty-bourgeois democrats had remained in our party."

Then what would Lenin have said if, within the party, there were not only reformists and petty-bourgeois, but bourgeois, and not just any bourgeois, but capitalist billionaires? It is impossible to imagine, simply because Lenin would never have been part of such a party and would never have allowed such an outrage to take place in the Bolshevik Party or in any party affiliated with the Third International. Lenin classified all the opportunist, social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trade union leaders, "petty-bourgeois by way of life and by the amount of their income", as "agents of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement" and made all that quite clear: "[Our] organisation is superior to every other. No idler, no exploiter can belong to this organisation" (V.I. Lenin, First All-Russia Congress on Adult Education, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29).

Stalin also firmly repudiated those who defended the coexistence within the Party of reformists and the petty-bourgeoisie: "The theory of 'defeating' opportunist elements by ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of 'overcoming' these elements within the confines of a single party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to make the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to leave the proletariat without a revolutionary party, threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism" (Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*).

The billionaires and the CPC's betrayal

This is the Marxist-Leninist conception of what the composition and character of a true communist party should be. Well, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the apologists for false Chinese socialism totally disagree with this Leninist conception of the party.

Let us look at the facts.

Jack Ma is one of the richest capitalist entrepreneurs in China. He owns the Alibaba conglomerate. The personal fortune of this Chinese "communist" is estimated at about US \$37 thousand million. Ma, like all the capitalists in the world, enriched himself through the exploitation of workers; their objective was well revealed by Karl Marx in his masterful work *Capital*.

Do not be afraid, comrades: this rich Chinese business owner is one of the notable members of the Communist Party of China and was one of those honored at the 19th Party Congress for becoming one of the "main architects of socialism with Chinese characteristics," reported the *People's Daily*, organ of the CPC, in its edition of November 27, 2018.

Jack Ma. Although he is the author of the phrase: "I did not come to this world to work. I don't want to die at a desk, I want to die on a beach", he advocates that China implement the 996 system throughout the country: working from 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M., six days a week. His proposal was defended in an article addressed to the company's employees, in which he states that working 12-hour days "is a blessing" and that without this workload, the Chinese economy "would very likely lose its vitality and its momentum. The number of civil servants increased in recent years... and the number of unemployed grew rapidly. If this continues, the company will be quickly eliminated from the market!" wrote this Chinese "Communist" Party member (Bloomberg, April 15, /2019). As we can see, Ma's thinking is not his bad judgment, but in its pure form, an important bourgeois concept.

Another prominent member of the Communist Party of China is the billionaire Liang Wengen, owner of the Sany Group, a construction machinery industry, which exploits about 70,000 workers. The "communist" Liang, thanks to "socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era", and owner of a fortune of US \$5.9 thousand million, has been a member of the CP of China since 2004. He and more than 30 big capitalists (all owners of fortunes of thousands of millions of dollars) made up a group of 2,270 delegates at the 18th



Congress of the Communist Party of China. Liang Wengen was even nominated to be a member of the Central Committee of the "Communist" Party of China, a body that has 370 members. However, according to the Chinese news agency Xinhua, Liang declined his candidacy with the following words: "How could I take up this position? I can't do that job. I hope that other private entrepreneurs will carry our wishes to the Party leadership. But this shows that the Party and the government defend and support the social group of private business owners", says Liang (*Xinhua*, November 13, 2012).

The "harmonious and peaceful" coexistence of the bourgeoisie with the proletariat, instead of the class struggle, is one of the fabulous pearls of the Theory of Triple Representation or the Thought of the Three Representations, which made it official that the class enemies, the capitalists, can join the CPC without restriction. This precious programmatic principle was approved at the 16th Party Congress in 2002, a proposal presented by Jiang Zemin, president of the country from 1993 to 2003, and became one of the particularities of "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

What kind of growth is that?

In the last four decades, the growth in the number of bourgeois in China has been so spectacular that the Italian philosopher Domenico Losurdo, one of the most enthusiastic apologists of market socialism described this phenomenon in a 2001 article as follows: "And yet, precisely as a result of the success of policy reforms and the extraordinary economic growth of China, the number of millionaires and billionaires is growing dramatically; will the wealth accumulated by the new capitalists have an influence on politics? It is in light of this concern that you may fully comprehend the on-going campaign against corruption. The clean-up process does not aim only to consolidate social consensus on the Communist Party of China and the government; it means to implement Deng Xiaoping's recommendation and thus prevent the 'bourgeois elements' from forming a class that is ready to take power." (Domenico Losurdo: *Has China Turned to Capitalism? – Reflections on the Transition from Capitalism to Socialism*, 2017)

Nothing could be more revealing than Deng Xiaoping's theory, Xi Jinping's thought, and "market socialism" than Losurdo's words. In fact, the so-called Chinese growth, in the words of one of his admirers, has led to a spectacular growth of millionaires and billion-

aires, that is, the increasing accumulation of wealth on the part of the capitalists. What a fantastic thing! How could Marx not have predicted this?!

Well, to prevent the bourgeois elements, the capitalists that are growing dramatically in the country, from forming a social class and taking power, the solution that Losurdo presents is to fight corruption and have faith in Deng Xiaoping's theory. Let us see:

“While initiating his policies of reform and openness, Deng was aware of their inherent risks. In October 1978, he cautioned, ‘We shall not allow a new bourgeoisie to take shape.’ This goal is not contradicted by tolerance granted to individual capitalists. Of course, they must be given much consideration. However, one point is constant: ‘the struggle against these individuals is different from the struggle of one class against another, which occurred in the past (these individuals cannot form a cohesive and overt class)’ (Deng, 1992- 95)” (Losurdo, op. cit.).

What enormous power Mr. Deng has! His simple recommendations are enough to prevent the bourgeois (who have the same class interests and the same ideology, they exploit the workers for surplus value and to increase their wealth), even if they grow dramatically, from forming a class! Is that so, Mr. Losurdo?! Without fighting against capitalist exploitation, against the bourgeoisie, can one just focus on corruption?! In China, is there no more talk of nipping the evil in the bud?

So millionaires and billionaires, remember Deng's words, and don't dare to form a class and take power in China. You can earn thousands of millions, join the Chinese Communist Party by the thousands, exploit the working masses, export your capital or place it in tax havens, you can steal land from peasants, form a reserve army of 200 to 300 million migrant workers, and still you will not be a class or organize a party to take power.

In fact, Mr. Deng's "teachings" are so powerful that they try to reverse everything Marx wrote on the historical trend of capitalist accumulation.

The lies about NEP

Ashamed to admit that there is nothing socialist in the existing economic and political regime in China, from time to time, when they are faced with the tragedies brought about by capitalism in the country, the theorists of market socialist say that Leninists cannot

complain, as Lenin proposed the New Economic Policy (NEP) shortly after the October Revolution.

But that is another fallacy. The NEP was an economic policy for a certain period in Russia and was adopted to replace another previously existing economic policy, war communism. Furthermore, the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), held in June 1930, decided that the time had come to transform "NEP Russia into Socialist Russia", including reducing the working day to 7 hours a week, with a five-day week.

By 1934, socialist industry already constituted 99% of the whole country's industry, and socialist agriculture – collective farms and state farms – comprised about 90% of the total sown area. That is why, in a speech at the 17th Congress in January of 1934, Stalin stated: "We can now say that the first (patriarchal economy), the third (private capitalism) and the fourth formation (state capitalism) no longer exist, the second social-economic formation (small commodity production) has been forced into a secondary position, while the fifth social-economic formation – the Socialist formation – now holds unchallenged sway and is the sole commanding force in the whole national economy." (Quoted in *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik)*).

If the Chinese "communists", instead of offending Comrade Stalin, had at least read his speech of October 19, 1928 (*The Right Danger in the C.P.S.U.(B)*.)

"Under the conditions of Soviet development, when capitalism has already been overthrown, but its roots have not yet been torn out, the Right deviation in communism signifies a tendency, an inclination that has not yet taken shape, it is true, and is perhaps not yet consciously realised, but nevertheless a tendency of a section of the Communists to depart from the general line of our Party in the direction of bourgeois ideology."

Isn't it clear that when the CPC preaches tolerance and consideration for the capitalists and declares the billionaires and exploiters of the working class to be "communists" and party members, this is a true betrayal of the working class?

Unemployment and inequality in China

To defend the "success" of the reforms that restored capitalism in China, apologists for false Chinese socialism are constantly praising the fact that the country has the highest growth rates in the

world. The richest banking sector produces and exports more than any other country, it has 119 companies on the list of the 500 world's largest companies, and many are state-owned. It exports more capital than it imports; Huawei, owned by the millionaire Ren Zhengfei family, is a leader in 5G technology; "Comrade" Jack Ma's Alibaba dominates the world's online trade, and hundreds of Chinese billionaires, true capitalists made in China, are on Forbes magazine's list of billionaires. Yes, let us not forget the infrastructure "project of the century", the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Great progress, no doubt. But which class appropriates this enormous production of wealth? What benefits have the "four modernizations", the mutually beneficial (win-win) relationships, and economic reforms brought to the Chinese workers and people?

In the words of David F. Ruccio, Professor Emeritus at the University of Notre Dame, in an article published on March 24, 2020 on the Real-World Economics Review website:

"Capitalist crises are neither predictable nor do they stem from a single cause... But there is one thing capitalist crises all have in common: unemployment, (either due to) the bursting of speculative bubbles (or because companies have) extended their indebtedness way beyond their ability to pay in the event of an unexpected 'shock'."

"Under capitalism, workers have no right to a job (much less



the right to participate in decisions about when and where jobs will be created or destroyed). Instead, they have to work hard to attempt to sell their ability to work—and they’re forced to do so to survive, because their ability to perform labor is only valuable on the market when it can be used to make profits for someone else.”

According to Professor Ruccio: “More and more American workers are being let go by businesses that are cutting back on their operations or simply shutting down. That’s true in other countries, too—from China (where at least 5 million workers have lost their jobs) to Italy (which last week surpassed China in coronavirus-related deaths.” In his words, it is an “unemployment pandemic”.

Does this mean that there is unemployment in China and these unemployed workers cannot sell their labor power to the owners of the means of production?

Where did Ren’s virtue of the Chinese bourgeoisie go? Hell, yes, it can only be the work of the devil; it has nothing to do with capitalism, no matter what Professor Ruccio says; after all, he does not know the customs or the history of China.

Let us now pass the words of Branko Milanovic, former chief economist of the World Bank and professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, in his latest book *Capitalism, Alone – The Future of the System that Rules the World*:

“Whereas rural and urban inequalities in the 2010s were between 30 and 40 Gini points, the all-China inequality was almost 50 Gini points, with a slight decreasing tendency starting around 2009. This is a level of inequality that significantly exceeds US inequality, approaching inequality levels that we find in Latin America. It is also a level of inequality that is dramatically higher than in the 1980s, when China was, in terms of the share of the state sector in both employment and value added, still a socialist country. Thus, inequality has risen starkly in both rural and urban areas, and even more so (because of the increasing income gap between urban and rural areas) in China as a whole.

“Private firms are not merely numerous; many are large. According to official data, the share of private companies in the top 1 percent of firms ranked by total value added has increased from around 40 percent in 1998 to 65 percent in 2007 (Bai, Hsieh, and Song 2014). Ownership patterns in China are complex because they often involve central state, provincial state, communal, private, and foreign ownership in various proportions, but the role of the state in

total GDP, calculated from the production side, is unlikely to exceed 20 percent, while the workforce employed in the SOEs (state-owned enterprises) and collectively owned enterprises is 9 percent of the total rural and urban employment (China Labor Statistical Yearbook 2017)". (Milanovic, Capitalism, Alone).

Branko Milanovic also said:

"At the beginning of the reforms, the state set prices for 93 percent of agricultural products, 100 percent of industrial products, and 97 percent of retail commodities. In the mid-1990s, the proportions were inverted: prices were market-determined for 93 percent of retail commodities, 79 percent of agricultural products, and 81 percent of production materials (Pei 2006). Today even a higher percentage of prices are market determined" (Milanovic, op. cit.).

So 91% of workers in Chinese cities and countryside sell their labor power to capitalists and the state's share in industrial production is only 20%? Did the glorious economic openness increase the number of millionaires and increase inequality to a greater level than in 1980, when China was still a country with socialist characteristics? Did the theory of Deng Xiaoping and the thought of Xi Jinping reduce the share of state-owned enterprises in industrial production from 100% to just over 20%? Does this happen in China even with triple representation? How will socialism be achieved in 2050 at this rate? Is this the wonderful economic planning in China? Stalin was right when he said that without abolishing the principle of private ownership of the means of production, it is impossible to create a planned economy. And did capitalist reforms increase inequality in China? Is that possible? What will the apologists for market socialism say? Perhaps something like this: "We do not believe in this economist, we respect his studies on inequality, because we want to resolve all differences and contradictions with the bourgeois elements peacefully, but none of this will make us lose our faith in Deng's theory and Xi's thought."

There's more: Most Chinese line up at crowded public hospitals, while the rich are welcomed at luxurious private hospitals. Also in education there have been changes for the worse: only nine years of study are free. However, the family that wants their son or daughter to go to college has to pay.

In China, the working class is an exploited class that works not for itself, but for the class of exploiters, the bourgeoisie. The production of the economy is subject to the incessant search for profit

on the part of the bourgeois elements, which control 80% of industrial production. There is unemployment and prices are set by the capitalist elements and the monopolies that control the means of production and foreign trade, as, indeed, they did before the 1949 Revolution.

Still, the modern revisionists insist that China is a "socialist country with Chinese characteristics of the new era." Ah! Excuse the opportunists, traitors to Marxism-Leninism! It is not about socialism or communism, but about a "new mode of production, market socialism would just be the fancy name of this New Design Economy", as geographer Elías Jabbour told IHU (IHU online, October 16, 2019).

These are not prejudices, but in the face of such idealism and fanciful imagination, we prefer to continue believing in the words of Karl Marx: "The aim of our struggle is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of the old bourgeois society based on antagonisms, and the foundation of a new society without classes and without private property". Long live Marxism-Leninism!

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

August 2020

Solidarity with the People's Struggles in the United States against Impunity for Police Violence and Racist Crimes

The assassination of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, suffocated by a white police officer, sparked a powerful protest movement that has set ablaze several cities in the United States and around the world.

The unbearable images widely circulated on social media showed the police officer with his knee on his neck and chest, coldly suffocating George Floyd. "I can't breathe, I can't breathe. Please sir, Please sir. Please. Please. Please. I can't breathe.". These were the last words spoken by the victim before he died.

This murder is sadly part of the long macabre list of the many unpunished racist crimes in the United States, where the racism that is structurally embedded in the imperialist system of domination has always deprived Afro-Americans of the most basic democratic and social rights.

A reminder of some tragic events provides a living illustration:

- 1967. Following an altercation between two police officers and an Afro-American taxi driver, the inhabitants of Newark, a working-class neighborhood consigned to social misery, organized a violent response for 5 days, from July 12 to 17. The barbaric repression left 26 dead and 1,500 injured.

In Detroit, demonstrations broke out to protest against a police intervention on 12th Street, mainly frequented by black people. The National Guard and the Army were deployed to quell this revolt, which lasted more than 4 days, from July 23 and 27. The clashes left 43 dead and more than 200 injured. There were similar mobilizations in several states, including Illinois, North Carolina, Tennessee and Maryland.

- 1968. Following the assassination of Martin Luther King, the black pastor, in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, violent protests broke out in 125 cities, leaving 46 dead and about 2,600 injured. In Washington, a city made up mainly of Afro-Americans, the movement was insurrectionary, with buildings set on fire. The demonstra-

tions unfolded near the White House. By executive order, President Lyndon B. Johnson called in the Army in Chicago, Boston, New York and Cincinnati.

- 1980. Miami. From May 17 to 20, after 3 days of demonstrations, there was a sad toll of 18 dead and more than 400 injured in the black district of Liberty City. The clashes erupted following the acquittal by a Tampa court of 4 white police officers charged with beating to death a black motorcyclist who ran a red traffic light.

- 1992. Los Angeles. The same denial of justice occurred with the acquittal of 4 white police officers guilty of beating a black driver, Rodney King on March 3, 1991. The city was shaken by violent protests, which spread to other large cities like San Francisco, Las Vegas and New York resulting in 59 dead and 2,328 injured.

- 2001. Cincinnati. On April 7, a 19-year-old Afro-American youth, Timothy Thomas, was killed like an animal by a white police officer after a chase. This murder sparked violent demonstrations that were harshly repressed with the establishment of a state of emergency and a curfew. Result: 70 injured.

- 2014. Ferguson, Missouri. An 18-year-old Afro-American youth, Michael Brown, was shot and killed by a white police officer. This racist crime provoked 10 days of violent clashes, from August 9 to 19, between the Afro-American population and the police equipped with rifles and armored vehicles. But new explosions of revolt took place at the end of November 2014 following the abandonment of the legal proceedings against the criminal police officer.

- 2014. Eric Garner, a 43-year-old Afro-American father of 6 in New York, died after being thrown to the ground by white cop. One of the criminals choked his neck tightly with both hands. He was dead when he arrived at the hospital.

- 2016. Baltimore. On April 19, Freddie Gray, a young black man died a week after being seriously injured with fractured vertebrae while being transported in a police van.

- 2016. Charlotte. In September, in this city of North Carolina, violent demonstrations broke out following the death of Keith Scott, an Afro-American of 43 years. He was killed as he got out of his car surrounded by several police officers. According to the police version, they wounded him because he refused to drop his handgun. But his relatives say that he was actually holding a book in his hand

and quietly waiting for his son at a bus stop. To quell these popular revolts, the governor declared a state of emergency and called in reinforcements from the soldiers of the National Guard.

- Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old black jogger, was shot in cold blood by a former police officer and his son at the end of February 2020 in the state of Georgia.

- In March 2020, Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old paramedic, was shot dead in her home by police in Louisville, Kentucky. They were looking for a suspect who no longer lived in the building. He was in fact already incarcerated.

Numerous crimes of blood against Afro-American communities mark the history of the United States. The vast majority of these crimes go unpunished. Mitigating circumstances are systematically found to exonerate the criminal police despite the protests and mobilizations to demand truth and justice.

It is thus easy to understand the powerful mobilizations and demonstrations which are sweeping the cities of the United States today like a hurricane to denounce police violence, racism and all forms of discrimination that have plagued U.S. society for centuries. The current movement recalls the great struggles of the 1960s against racial segregation and for the civil rights of the Afro-American population. But they are taking place in the context of the deepening of the crisis of the imperialist system, magnified by the consequences of the health crisis of the coronavirus. The number of unemployed due to layoffs and the numerous bankruptcies and



business closures has reached 20 million people. Many people find themselves on the streets because they cannot pay their rent. Endless lines form at the doors of food pantries looking for food or just a meal. This has revealed more fully in the eyes of the world the fundamentally inhuman character of the U.S. imperialist system, the gaping social inequalities, structural discrimination in all areas, including health care, education, housing, etc. Because the poorest social strata, including many Afro-Americans who are in dire poverty, are deprived of social protection, they are the main victims of Covid 19.

As the racist assassination of George Floyd took place in this context of the extreme worsening of the crisis and in the face of the reactionary outrages of Trump supporting police violence and considering deploying the Army and the National Guard, anger exploded and spread very quickly in the vast majority of U.S. cities.

The movements of popular struggle that are now engulfing the country are not limited to the Afro-American populations. They incorporate various components of U.S. society in convulsion: young people, women, intellectuals, popular social strata, the middle classes, associations for the defense of human rights, and people of various origins regardless of the color of their skin. In unity, they are thwarting the divisive maneuvers of the imperialist system through the poison of racism and are confronting the forces of repression by chanting slogans in tribute to George Floyd and denouncing discrimination: "Black Lives Matter".

This powerful momentum of popular struggle against police violence, racism and discrimination has given rise to mobilizations and demonstrations of solidarity at the international level. The peoples, especially the youth on the front line, are finding a resonance there because they are faced with the same problems in their respective countries. Indeed, the bourgeoisies, the monopolies and the States at their service in the various countries are taking anti-popular and anti-social measures in this context of the worsening crisis. Everywhere they resort to the same methods of dividing the workers, peoples and youth, using the poison of racism. They are also resorting to barbaric repression, police violence and crimes of blood to crush the struggles. Thus in France, in the many demonstrations in various cities (Paris, Marseille, Bordeaux, Toulouse, etc. in homage to George Floyd, people are making the link between police violence and racist crimes in the United States and in their

country. They are also demanding truth and justice for Adama Traoré, who died at the hands of the police in the Paris region in 2016.

In our country, the MPP (People’s Movement for Progress) regime in power, which is in a desperate situation, uses police violence against the struggles of workers and youth. It carries out targeted assassinations against activists of democratic and revolutionary organizations such as the two members of the Democratic Organization of Youth (ODJ) Fahadou Cisse and Hama Balima from Yagha province. These crimes are perpetrated by death squads who already have many similar cases on their account, including the assassination of Norbert Zongo. Moreover, imperialism, mainly French imperialism, and the various factions of the reactionary bourgeoisie are trying to divide our people through ethnicism, regionalism and / or religion in this troubled context of jihadist terrorist attacks.

Our people in their different components and the popular youth in unity have always waged resistance and struggle to denounce these crimes of blood and to demand truth and justice for these martyrs.

Also in the same spirit of struggle and international solidarity:

- We denounce police violence and racism in the United States and around the world.
- We demand Truth and Justice for George Floyd and all victims of racist crimes in the United States.

***Central Committee of the
Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta***

September 2020

The Strengthening of the European Union on the Backs of the Working Class

Just two month before March, when the WHO declared Europe the epicenter of the Covid 19 pandemic, the EU Infection Control Authority stated that “*the European countries have the necessary capacity to prevent and control an outbreak as soon as cases are detected*”. Now nine months later, with over 100,000 official Covid 19 deaths, where in some regions a whole generation of old workers have been wiped out in nursing homes by the pandemic and over 3 million have officially been infected, we are now in the second wave of the pandemic.

The lack of capacity is the consequence of the privatization and severe cutbacks in the public health-care system, and of the class policy of European capital and monopolies, the national governments and the supranational EU.

When the Covid 19 began to spread in the north of Italy, they asked for help from the EU Emergency Response Coordination Center, which coordinates crisis aid and epidemics within the EU, but there was hardly any response. Instead medical assistance was sent from China and Cuba. The Danish government sent four old respirators that were taken out of service because they were no longer usable. When the ban on export of face masks within the EU was finally lifted, it was replaced by a common ban on exports from the EU to people in the rest of the world. The coordination within the EU as well as the national use of protective equipment, medicines, tests, etc. in the different countries is based on capitalistic logic, its greed and anarchy, and shows why capitalism can never fulfill the basic needs of the working class and the people and has no solution or future..

The concrete political, economic and financial situation is different in each of the Member States of the EU and its associated countries. Therefore, we also see different government strategies and times for lock-downs, in the options and conditions to implement the EU policy, differences in the trust of the working class and peoples in the authorities and politicians, etc. But nevertheless the

bourgeois in all the countries is following the same basic policy in the interest of a stronger imperialist EU of the monopolies.

Common basic strategy of the EU monopolies

The union of the European monopolies and financial oligarchy – the European Union/EU – despite all its internal contradictions and different national circumstances, has been busy with two main common concerns during this Covid 19 pandemic and the growing economic crises.

One is to secure not only profit but also its position in the global market as a major imperialist player and in the growing rivalry between the imperialist superpowers. The fact is that sectors such as the industrial apparatus and at the technical-digital level, energy sector, infrastructure and military industry were already in need of renewal and investments before these current health and economic crises in order to reach the imperialist aim and purpose of the EU, including the so-called 4.0 technical revolution launched by the EU. And the lock-down of markets, transportation routes, and cut-offs of supplies and raw materials all add up to and call for stronger means to push the process.

The second concern of the EU monopolies and national bourgeois is how to implement new neoliberal austerity reforms and attacks on the workers in order to make the working class and people pay, and at the same time keep control over the political and social situation. The huge economic national and EU state loan called aid packages have come with demands for new, harsher reforms, either in the labor market or in the national budgets for health-care, education and social benefits. Right now in almost all the EU and associated countries there is a political landscape of growing frustration, anger, discontent and growing resistance against the EU demands on the countries, peoples and working classes.

The Brexit of the UK leaving the EU has been proclaimed in much of the bourgeois media a victory for the right wing, which uses and manipulates the discontent of the workers and petty bourgeois with the EU neoliberal policy. The workers did not vote for either the Conservative or Labor Party variations of the same neoliberal policy; they voted against the bosses in the EU and their devastating policy.

To avoid a repetition and as crises management, we see a new phase of centralization of power in the European Commission, currently under the leadership of German imperialism, in the European Central Bank under the leadership of the former CEO of the World Bank and in major EU institutions, all of which are strong pillars in the supranational state power of the EU and the finalization the federal United States of Europe. We see a militarization of the economy and build-up and division of labor of the military industry, forces and action to secure “Fortress Europe” and expand their imperialist interests outside the EU.

EU President Ursula von der Leyen referred in her recent annual “State of the Union” address to the rescue plan and centralization of power as the “Next Generation EU” and “A Stronger and Renewed EU after the Crisis”, both gift-wrapped as the EU’s Green New Deal.

New steps to secure the Euro and Eurozone

According to the IMF and the World Bank, in 2019 and 2020 the Eurozone was the world's third largest economy after China and the US, measured by purchasing power adjusted for GDP. But unlike China the growth in the Eurozone is decreasing and the economy is in recession; some Member States never recovered from the financial crises of 2008 before this new crisis hit.

In the EU’s economic and financial policies, government deficits and debt have been severely punished and placed as huge burdens on the backs of the working class: whether it happened in Greece with a state debt of 177% of GDP, in which the Greek government accepted the EU dictates that ruined the working class and the whole economy, or whether it happened in Denmark where a huge state robbery from the working class financed the reduction of the national state debt to 18% of the GDP through the poverty reforms and the abolition of early retirement pay. It also financed the biggest surplus in the EU and thereby has been able to take out large loans for the aid packages for industry and bank. The result was to make the working class pay. Despite that the EU policy on state debt and deficit has been carried out in two very different ways and circumstances in Greece and Denmark, the result has been the same: it is the working class and the working people that suffer the consequences of this policy and pay the price.

So when the EU government, the EU state leaders and Deutsche Bank now for the first time distance themselves from this institutionalized and treaty-bound principle on state debt and deficits and now will issue a common EU state debt of 750 milliard euro, it is basically to save the common currency, the Euro, and the Eurozone from collapse and save the interest of the two biggest economic powers in the EU – Germany and France. They have pushed this plan to make the smaller and weaker countries, peoples and the working class pay.

19 of the 27 countries in the EU are in the Eurozone. Denmark, Sweden and UK rejected it in referendums, whereas eastern EU countries like Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania have not yet qualified. But they are all woven into and bound by the rules and actions of the Eurozone.

The new EU budget has a deficit of almost 40%. There is an agreement that permits the EU to take out loans on behalf of all Member States to finance the deficit, instead of the former practice, where each Member State was liable for its own loans. How, how much and when the Member States have to pay this back has not been revealed. The agreement also gives the EU the right to collect direct supranational taxes as well as to dictate new neoliberal labor market reforms and new and harsher budget demands to the member states in return for “aid”.

The Danish government has entered into an agreement by which Denmark, as a member state, will be liable to pay for loans and debts to save the euro, to which the population has said No. The government even calls this financial aid to Denmark from the EU.

In the period 2011-18, the EU made 63 demands on Member States to cut down on the health-care budgets; which has contributed to the EU countries not ensuring the health of the population, even in the wake of this pandemic.

Closed borders but one common labor market

The EU is based on four capitalist freedoms: the free flow of capital, goods, services and labor. When the Covid 19 pandemic hit, many Member States such as Denmark closed their borders and sent armed soldiers and police forces, presented as a defense against the pandemic.

But as value, wealth and profit can only be made by the labor of the workers, and the EU is based on a common labor market, in

which capital wants the cheapest labor; on March 30 the European Commission issued its guidelines allowing the free flow of labor during the Covid 19 crisis. The member states and associates must ensure that many occupational groups can easily cross borders without difficulty, which necessarily increases the risk of infection and has done so.

In the Danish meat monopoly Danish Crown, most of the workers come from Poland and other eastern European states. The big outbreak of infections in some slaughterhouses was not only due to the working conditions and long hours but also to the fact that these migrant workers live crowded in especially poor housing conditions and are transported in busses to and from work.

In this crisis the EU has been forced to accept major problems such as with the internal borders and the Schengen agreement, state debts and state subsidies, but it never deviated from its core, the “divine right” for its monopolies and capital to exploit and oppress the workers by using the cheapest labor, and always trying to find some even cheaper. Between 20,000 and 30,000 migrant workers from Eastern European countries like Poland work in agriculture in EU-associated Norway, because they are cheaper than Norwegian labor. Poland then imports labor from Ukraine, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and India on short-term contracts, because they are cheaper than Polish workers. It keeps rolling down like that.

Because of greater expenses for transportations and quarantine regulations, the migrant workers are forced to stay for longer periods and work longer hours, which is one factor pushing the downward spiral on wages, working hours and conditions in all the coun-



tries. At the same time, unemployment is rising very fast.

In the largest construction project ever in Denmark, a bridge between Denmark and Germany, most of the labor comes from other EU states. The Danish State, the Social-Democratic government, the Danish labor aristocratic top trade union leaders and the private companies in charge have agreed to a 12-hour work day for 12 days in a row on this project. The purpose of this bridge is not only to lower the cost and time for goods to cross the Baltic Sea but mainly to secure the military transport of troops, equipment and weapons, as Denmark has the role of a transit point and storage of the EU/NATO northern military flank against the imperialist power Russia.

The principal contradiction

What started out in 1952 with 6 countries in the Coal and Steel Union, the two most important elements in the common building of a new military imperialist power after the massive destruction of World War II, is today, 68 years later, an almost fully developed supranational state power for the United States of Europe. It now includes 27 Member States and 16 countries in either full association, such as Norway, or in negotiation such as Albania, or where there are various special negotiation agreements, such as Turkey, Israel and Tunisia.

It has been and is a process and construction filled with all the inherent contradictions of capitalism and imperialism in a complicated patchwork, where contradictions are sharpened and weakened, changes in importance and strength with different expression in the different countries and Members States.

But no matter what, the main contraction between the working class and the bourgeoisie and between capitalism and socialism is the driving force and the main aspect in the development of the class struggle towards revolutionary change and the downfall of our national bourgeoisie as well as the EU of the monopolies. To raise the struggle against placing the burden of the crises on the backs of the working class, these two struggles cannot be separated. We must strengthen the solidarity among the working classes in all their complexity at both the national and supranational level, in every concrete way and in action against a common class enemy.

October 2020

An experience in the International Communist Movement

On the 40th Anniversary of the Communist Party of Labor

Contributions to the Critical and Optimistic Assessment

1.

This jubilee anniversary of the founding of our party is an opportune moment to make a general retrospective that allows us to assess the successes of the organization and errors verified during that period.

From the organizational point of view, the PCT was formed within the old Dominican Popular Movement, a revolutionary organization with a heroic and combative past that was obscured by serious errors of political orientation and the repeated fragmentation of its structure, which gave rise to divisions that they seemed to have no end.

The PCT emerged as a Marxist-Leninist party that made a profound review of the previous revolutionary experience and affirmed itself in Marxist theory as an essential tool to develop a clear ideological political orientation and bases of support.

In this process, the encounter with the experiences of other fraternal parties, which already had a long history in the fight against revisionism and other opportunist currents and in their organizational consolidation, was fundamental. They brought us their particular experiences which were of great interest to us. These included especially the experience of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador (PCMLE); the Communist Party of Spain Marxist Leninist (PCE-ML); and the Communist Party of Colombia Marxist Leninist (PCC-ML).

We learned from the international day to try to save the life of the young Erdal Eren of Turkey, sentenced to death by the dictator-

ship of that country, that in the terribly difficult conditions in that country, a group of communists was also building the party. This example served greatly to strengthen the subject factor in our revolutionary work and for the building of the combative and organized detachment of the working class in the Dominican Republic.

From very early on, our party showed its Proletarian Internationalism in practice.

II.

This circumstance and the consistency of its members and leaders made it possible for this project to continue to stand after 40 years, upholding the banners that gave rise to it. Many of the originators of this organization are no longer here today, some left in an untimely manner, some fell in the struggle, others left for circumstantial reasons, others were deserters and a smaller number were vulgar traitors. However, fortunately the organization preserved in its structure a considerable core of members and fighters from those early days. These active members and the experience that brought, along with the knowledge of the young generation constitute guarantees of perseverance on the path chosen on June 20, 1980.

In the course of these years the party has made mistakes and has also achieved important successes that must be borne in mind in order to continually learn from them.

When outlining errors and shortcomings, it is appropriate to highlight the tendency in many of our people to act as social activists or militants to the detriment of their condition as political activists, converting this situation into a poor political conduct in conditions in which open political struggle is the only way to recreate and promote the medium and long-term objectives for our project. This is a problem that has prevented greater advances in the work and struggle carried out throughout these years.

Linked to the above, another important problem that has affected the party during this period was the instability prevailing for years, although now overcome, of its leading nucleus, which affected the creation and materialization of long-term plans.

One mistake made at some point, which was important, was the orientation of trying to make ourselves into a mass communist party in the correct sense of the term (with great diverse and broad influence in society), when we still lacked a broad consolidated leader-

ship (national and middle) that could effectively lead to the attention that this degree of mass influence demanded.

Another political error was the delay in planning and taking up the electoral struggle as a valid means in the conditions created in the country long before 1990, when we took that bold step.

The successes and contributions of the PCT to the revolutionary and progressive movement in the country also explain the history of these years of party life.

The path in the building of our party as a revolutionary organization has revealed itself as a road that is generally correct insofar as it is a project that has not remained passive, but rather active, always with some political initiative before the country. At the same time, we are a stable organization that is the only political force that has not split in the Dominican Republic.

True to its class character, since it emerged the PCT took up the idea that the party is proletarian because of the social composition of its ranks, as well as its ideological orientation. Therefore, new recruiting campaigns of workers were planned. The first was for one thousand workers to join the PCT, with very good results. All this was within the framework of the dedication of its members to the struggle of the workers and the building of class-struggle unions.

Today, the PCT is the only left-wing party in the country that considers the working class as the vanguard, and thus develops initiatives such as Congresses promoting struggle and class unionism. So far there have been nine congresses and the preparation for the tenth is currently scheduled to begin in November of this year and to conclude in February of next.

The efforts made for the dissemination of Marxist-Leninist literature and ideas and to training its ranks is undoubtedly one of the main successes during these years of struggles and work. At this time, 42 titles of Marxist-Leninist literature have been published in Ediciones Triunfo Comunista, among these several editions of the *Communist Manifesto*; *Foundations of Leninism*; two editions of *Selected Texts* of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

Throughout this period, another success of the party has been its clear contributions to the popular organization and struggles, fostering and stimulating forms of organization and struggle that are as innovative as they are successful in incorporating the masses of the people in them and, at that time, with broad impact on society.

The clear-sightedness of our party has been shown in the conception and planning of the Committee of Popular Struggle and the Councils of Popular Unity in the 1980s; in the emergence of the neighborhood escalating strikes and the concept of the National Civic Strike as new forms of struggle in the country; the occupation of public offices (Industry and Commerce and the National Congress).

In the innovation of forms of student and youth organization and struggle expressed in the slogans "for a new quality in the student movement" and "towards an academic and youth movement"; promoting extracurricular courses started at the UASD [Autonomous University of Santo Domingo] for the first time in the early 1980s by the organization at the Faculty of Engineering; promoted by the movement against the red marks in the final record in order to make graduates of the UASD equal to those of private universities; in the proposal of Three Semesters a Year (two regular and one special), in the cultural Scientific Fairs, the University Carnival; the National Theater Workshop and the Caribbean youth camps, among others.

Another practice that shows the highly positive qualities of the PCT is its tactical flexibility, which indicates its maturity as a political organization to act in tune with the course of the national political process. In addition to the days of popular struggle and protest to which we are committed, the 1990 constitution of the Independent Political Movements at the local (municipal and congressional) level stands out.

Our party hit the nail on the head when it proposed, among the



demands of the country's progressive social and political movement, taking part in bodies of the State, and political reforms through a Constituent Assembly elected by popular vote; our active participation in electoral processes without ceasing to denounce their fraudulent nature and their support for an anti-democratic and excluding political regime.

The PCT has consistently campaigned for a political front as a necessary path for the accumulation of forces that emerged from the process of national liberation in the current historical circumstance, in which the National Cause was posed as a fundamental question to advance towards the ideal of democracy and social progress for the national majorities.

In this sense, during these years our party put a good part of its initiatives and resources at the service of a policy of unity in order to mobilize the left, progressive and democratic views and forces towards common objectives in order to contribute to their recovery and to push towards a change of course in the country.

This policy in a way summed up the experiences accumulated by our organization, which allow us to take up a concept of unity that transcends the individual organizations and gives priority to the broad range of leftist views that, for different reasons, remain outside the organized membership.

When "the walls" fell, the PCT very early on repeated, as it had done before, its defense of Marxism and its validity, making our modest theoretical contribution to the movement that, from various areas, confronted the storm of "Perestroika". Our clarity and firmness allowed us to continue standing and fighting today, when the insurmountable contradictions of the capitalist system and the class struggle have exposed that betrayal and opened new perspectives to the revolutionary struggle in a context of unprecedented theoretical and political challenges.

Throughout this period we have gained many friends whose friendship we have cultivated and respected as a valuable asset, a deep trust that we will never betray. We have also faced hostility, diatribes and the cunning blow of political and ideological enemies, whom we have always faced head-on and "at the barrel of a gun."

These have been years of hard work, struggle and sacrifices, paid with the sweat and blood of heroes and martyrs of our party and people, among whom we highlight the first and the last martyr of the party, comrades Nicolas Valerio and Marino Baez, in whose

names we pay tribute to all the comrades who have left us in an untimely manner while we reaffirm our commitment to the cause embraced on June 20, 1980, for a change of course in the country, for national liberation and socialism.

September 2020

Modern Revisionism, Direct Enemy of the Revolution and Socialism

In 1956, a few years after the death of Comrade J. V. Stalin, after the putsch organized by the Khrushchevites against the old Bolsheviks, the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, CPSU, took place in Moscow, which endorsed the rise of modern revisionism¹ to the leadership of the Party and the State of the Soviet Union.

Until then, the revisionist, Khrushchevite ideas distorting Marxism-Leninism, supposedly to "put it in tune with the times," had penetrated a large part of the leading cadres of the CPSU, as well as, the leadership of most of the Communist Parties that were in power, in the countries that made up the socialist camp, with the exception of the Parties of Albania and China, and, in the leadership of the majority of Communist parties on all continents.

The main theses put forward by the revisionists abandoned the fight against imperialism and capitalism, renounced the struggle for revolution and socialism, and proclaimed:

1. Peaceful coexistence, class collaboration, conciliation with the bosses; they argued that the representatives of the capitalist monopolies, the imperialist countries, the international bourgeoisie and the landowners had become thoughtful and reasonable, they claimed that it was possible to stop the danger of a general war with talks.
2. Peaceful transition, the possibility of gaining power through elections, of "structural reforms" that will gradually change the na-

¹ The Party of Labor of Albania and the Communist Party of China, as well as the Marxist-Leninists who were active in the old Communist Parties, called the revisionist theses shown from in power, by the social reformists, as modern revisionism. This was to differentiate it from the old opportunist positions of the Bernsteins and Kautskys that arose in opposition to Marxism in the late 19th century. Later, in the fight for the validity of Marxism-Leninism, the term Khrushchevism came into general use.

ture of capitalism; they rejected the revolutionary struggle for the seizure of power, the need to use revolutionary violence. According to them, the armed struggle was not necessary; it was only a useless sacrifice that should not be proclaimed much less organized by the proletarian revolutionaries.

3. Peaceful competition, according to which the systematic development of the socialist camp would show its superiority over capitalism and set the stage for the road towards socialism.
4. The elimination of the dictatorship of the proletariat, its transformation into the government of all the people. They proclaimed that socialist democracy had reached high levels that made it possible for the reactionary classes of the past to accept it and decide to coexist with it. The proletariat had to trust the overthrown reactionary classes; it had to invite them to govern with them, to "build" socialism together, as a guarantee for the Socialist Homeland, for international peace.
5. The new winds, the new balance of forces on an international scale and in each country demanded a change in the class nature of the Party; it had to be built as a party of all the people, in which business owners, well-meaning personalities of the bourgeoisie, coexist with workers. This change meant the renunciation of the immediate and medium-term interests of the workers, reducing the objectives of the proletariat to the struggle for immediate demands, for freedom and democracy in the framework of the capitalist system, making room in the ranks of the party, in its leadership, for the petty bourgeois and bourgeois democrats.
6. The communists should not provoke the wrath of the warmongers of the Pentagon and NATO, they should work for world peace, they should bear in mind that a world war, "would be an atomic conflagration that would destroy life and the planet."

The central objective of the Khrushchevite revisionists was to attack and destroy the greatest achievement of the working class and the peoples, the pioneering work of the communists, the Great October Revolution and the Homeland of the workers, the USSR.

The October Revolution of 1917, the overthrow of capital and the bourgeoisie, the seizure of power by the proletariat and the people in the largest country on earth, the formation of the Soviet Union and the construction of socialism, created a new world. They buried the old order of wage slavery; they formed the Socialist

Homeland, the vanguard of the workers of the world in the building of socialism, the revolutionary reference point for thousands of millions of workers on all continents, the safe rearguard of the international revolution.

The USSR was the tangible demonstration that capitalism could be defeated and the new world, socialism, could be built; the attacks of revisionism and reaction, of capitalism and opportunism were directed against it.

The ideological and political proposals put forward by revisionism caused a serious damage to Marxism-Leninism, to the international communist movement, to each of the communist parties throughout the world, to the revolutionary movement of the working class and the peoples, to the trade union movement, to the organization and struggle of the peasants and other popular sectors, to the mobilization of the youth; they meant a serious setback for the social and political rights won by the workers and the peoples.

The circumstances in which the onslaught of revisionism against Marxism-Leninism took place, in opposition to socialism and communism, allowed the subversion of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the destruction of the party of the proletariat. The Khrushchevites fulfilled the wishes and policies of imperialism and the international bourgeoisie, they destroyed the Soviet Union, they turned it into a social-imperialist country that contended for the domination of the world with U.S. imperialism.

Khrushchevite revisionism achieved a victory with grave consequences for the socialist countries, for the proletariat and the trade union movement, for the communist parties and the international communist movement. Revisionism came to power in the countries that made up the socialist camp; From there it advanced rapidly in the re-establishment of capitalism, in the restriction and elimination of the important social and material gains of the working class and the other laboring classes.

Imperialism and the capitalists, reaction, their ideologues and theorists clapped their hands, the communists had become "sensible," now one could talk with them and make agreements with them. They fabricated theses, based on false premises and sophistry; they proclaimed the superiority of capitalism, encouraged the reformist and conciliatory proposals that had become fashionable. The left opportunists embedded in the workers' and popular movement had prepared the way to ideologically disarm the proletariat, the

popular movement, in order to work to change the nature of the party of the proletariat.

On the other hand, the imperialists together with all the capitalists of the world never renounced their nature as owners of the world, their role as ruling classes at the international level and in each country. They never lowered their guard, they continued their attacks against the revolution and communism, against the revolutionaries; they accused the communists of being totalitarian, the dictatorship of the proletariat of being a system that stifled individual freedom and competition, the revolution and socialism as violent, undemocratic forms. They crushed with blood and fire the various revolutionary processes; they intensified the persecution, jailing, torture and murder of revolutionaries. In all countries, they reversed important gains and rights of the working class; labor flexibility, the privatization of public companies, and neoliberal policies took over the whole world. At the same time, they proclaimed the "wonders" of capitalism, of the consumer society, of personal well-being.

On the side of capital, there was no peaceful coexistence, no conciliation. The bourgeoisie always maintained its class dictatorship, through ideological pressure and police repression.

The damage caused to the international communist movement, to the party of the working class in each country, to the workers' and trade union movement, to the national liberation movement were of great magnitude; its effects persist to this day:

1. The Bolshevik Party, the Party of Lenin and Stalin was subverted, assaulted by opportunists and bureaucrats, transformed into a party for class conciliation, for subordination to capitalism and imperialism.

To strictly fulfill these purposes, the Khrushchevites threw mud on the personality and work of Stalin, they persecuted and purged the consistent Bolsheviks, they promoted the opportunists and careerists; they undermined the ideological strength of the party through gifts and perks, through persecution and repression.

The Bolshevik Party, forged in the union and political battles, in the revolutionary civil war, in the Great Patriotic War, in the industrialization of the USSR and the collectivization of the land, in the consistent practice of proletarian internationalism, the Party of Lenin and Stalin, was gradually transformed into a

party of administrators and bureaucrats, of opportunists and careerists, into an organization of groups and cliques.

2. The Soviet Union was gradually transformed into a social-imperialist country that subjected and looted the former socialist countries, that extended its economic, political and military interventionism into various countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Later it was plunged into an economic crisis and collapsed, fully returning to capitalism, in 1989.

The great material achievements of the new society for the benefit of hundreds of millions of workers were systematically dismantled, the right to work, to a fair salary, trade union democracy and the right to exercise workers' control over production were gradually lost. The working class, the ruling class and leader in the process of building socialism, was returned to the condition of an exploited and oppressed class by the new capitalists.

The cliques that rose to power in the former USSR came mainly from the ranks of the old CPSU, they were the careerists and opportunists who thrived in the shadow of the Party and chanted praises and flattery in favor of Stalin.

The rights of the peoples, nations and nationalities that made up the USSR were subverted by the revisionists in power in Russia and the other autonomous republics and regions, Great Russian chauvinism emerged in the theory and practice of the new ruling classes. From the Russian government, police and armed forces, nationalisms re-emerged in all areas, in the autonomous republics and regions, they gave rise to the formation of cliques that usurped the power of the proletariat.

The Soviet Union went from being the reference point of the revolution and socialism to a social-imperialist superpower that colluded with U.S. imperialism and was the protagonist, together with the U.S., in the contention for world domination.

The disappearance of the USSR swept away the great sagas of the struggle of the working class and the peoples, with the extraordinary achievements of the revolution and socialism, with the reference point of the communists and revolutionaries of the world.

3. In the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and Mongolia, the communist parties in power² meekly followed the route outlined by the Russian revisionists, soon becoming social democratic parties, reversing the social gains of the working class, erecting capitalist regimes and, in the late 1980s, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, they collapsed precipitously.

The baton of Khrushchevism forced the leadership of these parties to fully take up the new orientations. Any attempt at resistance was quickly crushed by the Kremlin bureaucracy, by pressure and blackmail and, if necessary, the leaderships of those parties were replaced by new bureaucrats, faithful to the designs of the CPSU leadership.

4. “The old communist parties that had waged heroic battles against fascism and dictatorships, against capital and for socialism fell victim to opportunism; they sank into the swamp of modern revisionism; they lost their class nature, they became reformist formations, they lost strength and presence in the working class, they decreased numerically until became small expressions that had little impact on politics”.³

The change in the class nature of the communist parties took place at the level of the leadership of each of them, thanks to the work and stick of Khrushchevism. The perks, trips and grants established by revisionism contributed to the formation of opportunist cliques that reproduced these same practices inside the parties, encouraged the careerists and lashed out at the consistent communists who resisted the betrayal of principles. In most communist parties there were sanctions and expulsions against the proletarian revolutionaries.

5. The change in the class nature of the party (they continued to use the name “communist party”), meant the elimination of the ideological and political force, of the organizational formation capable of organizing and leading the working class in the strug-

² In several countries of People’s Democracy, in Eastern Europe, there were abrupt changes in the leadership of the parties, promoted by the Khrushchevites, in search of unconditional supporters of their policies and proposals. Several leaders of the communist parties of Eastern Europe died in the Soviet Union.

³ The Struggle of Ideas. Pablo Miranda, Unity & Struggle No. 39, 2019

gle against capital, in the battles for the seizure of power, in the tasks of building the new society, socialism.

6. Proletarian Internationalism was fading. The struggle of the working class and the communists for the international revolution of the proletariat suffered great impacts, serious setbacks. The communists of the world had to parrot Khrushchev's rants, the international workers' movement had to subordinate itself to the interests of the capitalists of each country, the international movement against imperialist war became a pacifist platform, the internationalist solidarity of the communists with the struggle of the workers and peoples of the colonial countries became, in the imperialist powers, support of the bourgeoisie of their own countries, in the name of "patriotism".
7. The revolutionary trade union movement suffered attacks of great consequences. The reformist preaching, the eventuality of achieving the social gains of the working class through the union struggle without the need to assault the power of the capitalists, the struggle for the validity of democracy transformed into the final objective, as well as the social practice of social democracy and the communist parties turned opportunists, as well as the work of the bosses' unions contributed to the organic and ideological disunity of the union movement.

The World Federation of Trade Unions, once the powerful



Nikita Khrushchev in his meeting with Richard Nixon, then Vice-President of the U.S. The revisionist bigwig Leonid Brezhnev is also there.

international workers federation, became a bureaucratic and pacifist entity, it lost unions and workers' militancy, and today it only exists in name. Similar things happened with the International Federation of Teachers and the International Union of Students.

The social democrats, revisionists and other opportunists in fact colluded with the bosses, they advanced in the formation of union cliques that profited from the organization and activity of the unionists; they established, in fact, real companies for the administration of the unions on a national and international scale. At present, the workers' movement is, fundamentally, organizationally dispersed, ideologically disarmed, on the fringes of the political struggle for its interests. A good part of the unions lost their class nature, they became instruments of the bosses for the satisfaction of immediate demands, always within the framework of the rules of the system; they served as a way to put the working class to sleep, for its ideological and political disunity.

8. The national liberation movement, despite its development and activity in Asia, Africa and Latin America, without the strength and leadership of the communists, without the determined support of the USSR, lost the course of socialism; it fought important battles, achieved resounding victories in the independence struggle, but subsequently fell into the international networks of imperialism, it fell prey to neocolonialism.

The ideological and political struggle in defense of Marxism-Leninism

The proletarian revolutionaries, faithful to the legacy of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, steeled in the revolutionary conceptions of Marxism Leninism resisted and fought decisively against the revisionist theses and proposals, in defense of the revolution and socialism.

The Party of Labor of Albania⁴ was timely and forceful in denouncing and exposing Khrushchev revisionism; it encouraged and

⁴ At the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, held in Moscow in November 1960, Enver Hoxha made a clear speech demarcating lines with the opportunists of the CPSU leadership and in defense of Marxist-Leninist principles.

helped the true Marxist-Leninists who resisted and fought the opportunists within the old communist parties. The PLA preserved the dictatorship of the proletariat, the social and political gains of the working class and the people. Albania became a reference point for communists from all over the world. In 1991, due to the betrayal of a clique that had seized the leadership of the Party and State, socialism was defeated in that country.

The consistency of the leadership of the PLA, the prominent role of Enver Hoxha allowed the Party and the State to persevere in the Marxist-Leninist positions, the working class and the other laboring classes to obtain important achievements in the building of socialism, in material and intellectual well-being.

One of the significant contributions of the PLA and Albania was the head-on struggle against the theoretical proposals and policies of the Khrushchevite revisionists, the defense of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the consistent struggle for the revolution and socialism, the condemnation of the revisionist policies of the Communist Party of China, of Maoism, the stimulation and encouragement of the proletarian revolutionaries on all continents, the defense and practice of proletarian internationalism.

Albania resisted the siege of capitalism and social imperialism for several decades. It was, in the midst of the world of capital, the beacon of socialism and revolution.

The international pressure of imperialism, of the bourgeoisie and reaction, the harassment by the Chinese revisionists affected Albanian society and the PLA. Under these cloaks groups of opportunists emerged who took advantage of their positions in the Party and the Government to subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat, to rise to the leadership of the party and the government and to lead Albania towards capitalism.

The Communist Party of China, CPC, actively participated in the polemic against Khrushchevite revisionism, it contributed to unmasking the theses and policies of modern revisionism. The international battle in defense of Marxism-Leninism and against the betrayal of the Khrushchevite revisionists was developed, by the CPC in public polemics, in the International Conferences of Communist and Workers' Parties of 1957 and 1960. In that confrontation the CPC started fundamentally from opportunist positions from Maoism, masked in the cloak of defending the principles of Marxism-Leninism. In reality, in a short time the CPC unmasked its true

nature, that of a party that defends the interests of the bourgeoisie and led China to capitalism until it became an imperialist state that, today, is contending for the domination of the world.

The most systematic expression of Chinese revisionism was based on the ideas and policies elaborated by Mao Tse Tung, which became Maoism. In essence, Maoism expresses, within the communist party, the ideas and policies of the bourgeoisie, it preaches the subordination of the struggle of the working class and the peasantry to the interests of the national capitalists, the collaboration with international capital and, hand in hand with the leadership of a great country, the assumption of imperialist positions.

In fact, the great impact of the revisionist betrayal occurred in the second half of the 1950s. Until 1990, in the countries of the former socialist camp, the communist parties remained in power; that is, socialism and communist parties persisted in name but, in reality, capitalism prevailed in the economy, ideology and politics, the working class was ousted from power and in its place the castes of bureaucrats were established.

With the fall of the Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1989-1990), the revisionists were swept from power and the capitalists who proclaimed the failure of the revolution and communism were openly enthroned. In China, the new bourgeoisie still uses the name of the Communist Party.

The ideologues of reaction and imperialism proclaimed themselves invincible; according to them, capitalism was the genuine expression of democracy, it could only be surpassed by new stages in its own development. They decreed the end of ideologies, the failure of the revolution and socialism. A world of peace was being built in which the individual would flourish thanks to competition.

The new Marxist-Leninist communist parties

Within the great majority of communist parties, in those formations of battle-hardened combatants for the revolution and socialism, of heroic fighters against fascism, an intense ideological and political battle was waged between the reformist and conciliatory positions of the leading cliques and the class-based, truly communist policies that defended the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism.

This contention created a crisis and divided the old CPs. Proletarian revolutionaries who dared to fight openly against the betrayal

of the modern revisionists were expelled from the communist parties. This confrontation affected the trade union movement, the workers and youth.

As a result of this crisis that shook the communist parties, Marxist-Leninist positions and organizations emerged that took up head-on the struggle for the revolution and socialism and the ideological and political fight against modern revisionism. On all continents, as a consequence of this ideological debate, from the membership in the old communist parties, in open confrontation with the revisionist theses and the betrayal of the ruling cliques, the Marxist Leninist Communist Parties arose. Some of these formations disappeared or were absorbed by the same parties from which they emerged or by petty-bourgeois revolutionary positions, since a good part of their members were, mainly, opponents of the bureaucratic policies and practices of the ruling cliques of the parties.

Another group of new Marxist Leninist Parties arose after several years, as a result of the struggle of the working class, the peoples and the youth against capitalism and for socialism, in the scenario of the rise of the struggle of the masses of the 1960s and '70s, in the theoretical and political confrontation between Marxism-Leninism and right and left opportunism.

The Marxist-Leninist Parties emerged as small organizations, they confronted capital and imperialism and at the same time revisionism and opportunism. Not all the organizations that claimed to be Marxist-Leninists survived; some were dispersed, others deviated to positions alien to proletarian conceptions.

The international Marxist-Leninist communist movement developed in a dispersed manner, each party fighting in its own country. The efforts of coordination, discussion and the making of concrete internationalist agreements were weak and small; they did not allow the formation of an international Marxist-Leninist communist movement capable of playing a role of ideological and political reference, of coordination of the internationalist struggle of the proletariat.

The new Marxist-Leninist parties were besieged by the opportunist positions of the theory of the three worlds, of Maoism that proclaimed the alliance with the so-called national bourgeoisie. Facing this disastrous influence, a good part of the parties based them-

selves on Marxist-Leninist positions, but also some of the ML Parties⁵ became Maoist and third-worldist formations.

A new ideological and political demarcation took place.

The collapse of the so-called "real socialism", the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the defeat of socialism in Albania, which occurred in 1989-1991, produced a new ideological and political blow to the workers and popular movement, to the national liberation movement, to the leftists and revolutionaries, to the Marxist-Leninist parties.

Although we Marxist-Leninists were clear that the debacle of "real socialism" was the failure of revisionism, of its theoretical theses and its reformist and counterrevolutionary policies, the majority of the workers' and trade union movement, the working masses and the youth fundamentally assumed that socialism had been defeated. The ideological onslaught sowed uncertainty in large sectors of the working class and the peoples.

The ideologues of reaction and imperialism, the liberal and social-democratic politicians proclaimed the death of socialism and the superiority of capitalism, which they identified with freedom and democracy. They decreed the failure of the revolution, the death of socialism and communism.

The Marxist-Leninist communist parties suffered these new blows, they were affected by the anti-communist offensive, they suffered desertions and attrition, but a significant number of them reaffirmed themselves in the principles and ideals of communism, they continued the struggle for the revolution and socialism.

In 1994, in Quito, Ecuador, these proletarian revolutionary formations were integrated into the International Conference of Marxist Leninist Parties and Organizations, ICMLPO, and, since then, they have been confronting capital and imperialism, under adverse and complex conditions.

The rise of the revolutionary struggle of the peoples in the 1960s and '70s

In 1959 a popular revolution triumphed in Cuba, breaking the thesis of geographical fatalism that stated the impossibility of a so-

⁵ In this ideological and political confrontation between Marxist-Leninists and Maoism, the PLA played an important role; it became a reference point for proletarian revolutionaries on all continents.

cial revolution in Latin America. The Cuban Revolution became a reference point for the workers and youth in Latin America and other continents. It demonstrated the validity of the revolutionary armed struggle, of the democratic and anti-dictatorial banners, as well as the probability of defeating imperialist domination. The development of the confrontation with the international monopolies, the defeat of the invasion of the Cuban reactionaries at Playa Giron ["Bay of Pigs"] sponsored by the United States, determined that the leaders of the Cuban process declared the socialist character of the revolution and that important but incomplete measures against capital and for the benefit of workers were implemented.

As is known, the Cuban revolutionary process followed the path of revisionism, the sphere of "real socialism", the social-imperialist orbit of the USSR led by the revisionists. Today, the Cuban people are resisting the imperialist blockade, while the regime and society are struggling in the crisis of capitalism.

The struggle of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa was developing in great waves; several dozen independent countries emerged in the regions where the colonial empires had ruled. The old empires of England, France, Holland and Germany collapsed. These processes of national liberation achieved political independence in a good number of countries. Later on, the old empires, transformed into imperialist countries, united with the strengthened US imperialism, formed economic, commercial, cultural, political and military ties to reestablish their domination. Neo-colonialism was born.

In most of the countries of Latin America, but also in Africa and Asia, fighting guerrilla formations emerged, in the countryside and in the city, which set themselves the goal of socialism. Those processes were filled with voluntarism and revolutionary idealism, inspired and guided by the theses of the guerrilla foco. They were combats in which thousands of young people were involved who gave up their lives in actions that were finally defeated by the superiority of the imperialists and the bourgeois governments and due to the nature of the ideology and the politics that inspired them, which was based on the role of the personalities, of the liberators of the masses.

Millions of young people took to the streets of the main capitals of the world, proclaiming their opposition to imperialism and capitalism. France, Turkey, China, Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil were shak-

en by the youth battles. Practically all countries, on all continents were the scene of large youth mobilizations against the establishment, for the revolution and socialism. We emphasize May 1968 in France, the Cordovaso in Argentina, Tlatelolco in Mexico [referring to a popular uprising in Cordova and the massacre of hundreds of unarmed demonstrators in Tlatelolco, Mexico City – *translator's note*], the collapse of the military dictatorships in Ecuador and the student struggle in Brazil.

The movement of the workers and young people in opposition to the war of intervention of the United States in Vietnam emerged and developed on a large scale, condemning militarism and proclaiming its vocation for winning peace and social justice.

The so-called hippie movement expressed the rupture of millions of young people with the establishment and for a new world.

In 1975, the Vietnamese people expelled the U.S. invaders from the country that used hundreds of thousands of soldiers, powerful weapons of mass destruction, napalm, and caused massacres that exterminated peoples and communities. The victory of the people of Vietnam showed once again how a people united, organized and fighting with arms could overthrow the greatest military power of the time.

In Iran, in 1979, a popular insurrection in the streets toppled the Shah's monarchical and dictatorial government from power and the Islamic Republic of Iran was formed.

In Nicaragua, the struggle of the people, the workers and the youth overthrew, after a long and bloody armed struggle, the dictatorial and reactionary Somoza dynasty. In 1979 a new popular revolution was taking place in Latin America.

A large group of intellectuals took up revolutionary ideas, contributed to the unmasking of imperialist domination, an advanced progressive trend was formed, that later, lacking a clear reference point of a Marxist-Leninist character, faded away. Most of these intellectuals joined the establishment.

In the end, the 1960s and 1970s saw a general rise in the struggles of the workers, peoples and youth. In reality it was a height of the revolutionary struggle. Millions of people, in all corners of the globe, rose up in struggle for freedom and democracy, against capitalism and imperialism, for the revolution and socialism.

This rise of the revolutionary struggle, despite its magnitude and generality, did not lead to the victory, in any country, of the social revolution of the proletariat, to socialism.

The Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations were present in a good part of these liberating battles. These were small and weak organizations that emerged in this context, which did not know how to nor could they influence the course of these battles. The former communist parties that became reformist formations worked to put out the fires of the popular struggle.

The events showed that the exacerbation of imperialist plunder against the dependent countries and the exploitation of capital over thousands of millions of workers were confronted by the anger of the working class and the peoples, with the integration of broad strata of youth into the struggle for national and social liberation. They also made it clear that without the existence of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, without the guidance of revolutionary theory, the struggle of the working class and peoples cannot follow the sure course of the revolution and socialism.

The national liberation struggles that achieved victory did so under the leadership, fundamentally, of radicalized sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, and in some countries, by positions of sectors of the bourgeoisie; These circumstances and the non-existence or weakness of the Marxist-Leninist communist parties acted together so that this process did not go beyond the political independence of several countries and, in some places, it led to defeat.

“At the time of the revolutionary wave of the second half of the 20th century, the communist parties were corroded by revisionism and therefore incapable of playing the role of vanguard. In that whirlwind, our Marxist-Leninist parties were born and we were not able to grow to fulfill our responsibilities. Now we exist, we are a concrete fact, we are still weak and small, but we must and can grow to take on the tasks of history”.⁶

This rise in the struggle of the workers and the peoples, of large mobilizations of the youth on all continents, became one of the great expressions of rebellion, of the will and determination of the masses to fight, which, however, could not culminate in the revolu-

⁶ “Latin America and the Social Revolution of the Proletariat.” Pablo Miranda, Unity & Struggle journal #14, February, 2007.

tion and socialism. It showed that the damage caused by opportunism and revisionism to the communist parties and to the workers' and trade union movement was of great significance.

The ebb of the workers' and revolutionary movement caused by the collapse of "real socialism"

The pressure of imperialism, reaction and opportunism, the inability of the revisionist cliques that used their power in the countries of "real socialism", as the revisionist regimes of Europe and Asia were called, the economic and political crisis that broke out in those countries provoked massive demonstrations of the workers and youth against those governments that finally led to their collapse.

The symbols of "real socialism", the Berlin Wall, the situation that had taken place in the USSR, which had turned into a social-imperialist superpower, fell precipitously. The Berlin Wall collapsed and the USSR quickly disintegrated. The regimes of People's Democracy in Eastern Europe succumbed one by one and the old classes overthrown by the proletariat returned to power together with bureaucrats and traitors of the communist parties.

Similar phenomena occurred in Albania. The preaching of abundance and personal wealth under capitalism had an impact on strata of the youth, added to the positions of betrayal by the ruling groups in the Party and the government; after the death of Enver Hoxha they caused the defeat of socialism in Albania, the disappearance of the Party of Labor of Albania.

In a relatively short period of time, several revolutionary processes that were underway were dismantled and defeated, the workers' and union movement suffered attacks that contributed to their greater dismantling and dispersion.

The ideologues of capitalism, reaction and imperialism spoke of the death of socialism and communism, of the failure of the revolution; they proclaimed the end of ideologies, the superiority of capitalism.

These events caused a historical setback, the disappearance of socialism as a social system (there was no longer any country in which the working class and communists were building socialism), the ebb of the workers' and trade union movement, the loss of rights and gains of the workers and peoples, the imposition of neoliberal policies in all countries and regions.

This situation was expressed in all countries and continents, the Marxist-Leninist formations that resisted the attacks did so in disadvantageous conditions, fighting against the current.

These events showed, once again, that the revolutionary proletariat and its Marxist-Leninist parties did not have the capacity to resist much less to defeat this anti-communist offensive that had globalized dimensions. They highlighted the serious damage caused by revisionism.

The class struggle between 1990 and 2020, the gradual and localized recovery, the working class, the peoples and the youth

The ebb of the struggle of the working masses and the youth, of the workers' and trade union movement, of the revolutionary movement for national liberation and of the struggle of the communists lasted for several years.

From resistance to the policies of imperialism and the bosses, the workers' movement gradually passed to the strike struggle for their rights, to direct confrontation against the attacks of capitalism.

Important mobilizations of the masses and youth took place in several countries, in Latin America, Asia and Africa in opposition to neoliberalism, to the reactionary and pro-imperialist governments, in defense of freedom and democracy.

This process of recovery of the workers' and popular movement has been developing gradually and unevenly. It is taking place in one or more countries, causing waves that then recede.



In 2019 there was a turning point. In several countries of Latin America, Europe and Asia there were large mobilizations of workers and peoples in which large segments of the youth participated in an appreciable way. These demonstrations are clearly actions against capital and imperialism, they demand freedom and democracy, but they do not constitute expressions for the revolution and socialism.

At the end of 2019, a new rise of the revolutionary struggle could be seen coming, a rise in the struggle of the working class and the people, of the youth; capitalism was being questioned and condemned openly and head-on.

The advent of a new crisis of capitalism in the environment and the conditions of the pandemic caused by Covid 19 produced a slowdown in the struggle of the working class and the peoples but did not paralyze it.

Everything suggests that the prospect of a new rise in the revolutionary struggle of the workers and the peoples exists in the imagination of the masses, in the disposition of the revolutionaries and communists.

Probably, this new revolutionary wave will weaken imperialist domination, cause cracks in the world of capital, gravitate to the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the working class and youth, strengthen the revolutionary formations and contribute to the coming together and growth of the Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations, to advances of the international communist Marxist Leninist movement, but it will hardly produce a new proletarian revolution, mainly due to the weakness of the Marxist Leninist communist movement.

By way of conclusions

1. Fascism, which devastated the world from the 1930s, was defeated by the struggle of the workers and the peoples, by the democratic and progressive forces, by the participation in that contest of several imperialist and capitalist countries and fundamentally, by the role played by the Soviet Union and the communist parties of all continents.
2. The defeat of fascism and the victory of the Allies created the conditions for a rise in the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peoples. The social revolution of the proletariat took place in several countries of Europe and Asia. The colonial world was

- destroyed by the national liberation struggle in Asia and Africa. The organization and struggle of the working class achieved important social and material gains in all countries, the unity and international organization of the workers was strengthened. The socialist camp was formed.
3. The counter-offensive of capitalism and reaction, as well as the counter-revolutionary action of the renegades to Marxism-Leninism within the communist parties, provoked the rise of opportunist positions within the communist parties and in the countries of the socialist camp.
 4. A coup d'état took place in the CPSU that overthrew the Bolsheviks and elevated a clique of opportunists led by Khrushchev to the leadership of the Party and the State.
 5. In 1956, the 20th Congress of the CPSU enshrined the betrayal of the revisionists and began the reversion to capitalism in the USSR.
 6. The great majority of communist parties succumbed to the opportunist wave; they became reformist parties.
 7. In opposition to the revisionist policies, to the practice of the leadership of the great majority of communist parties, the true proletarian revolutionaries, the consistent communists emerged. In the midst of the sharp ideological and political combats, the Marxist-Leninist communist parties emerged, which upheld the Marxist-Leninist principles, the communist ideals and took up the struggle to organize and make the revolution.
 8. The Marxist-Leninist parties emerged small and in a reduced number of countries. They undertook the struggle for the revolution in the midst of difficult and complex circumstances; they confronted the politics and repression of imperialism and reaction and the offensive of opportunism. They grow slowly.
 9. In the 1960s and 1970s, as a consequence of the sharpening of the contradictions of the period, there was upsurge in the revolutionary struggle of the workers, peoples and youth at the international level.
 10. This revolutionary wave, in which millions of people participated on all continents, despite its depth and generality, did not lead to the proletarian revolution in any country. The proletariat achieved important social and material gains but continued to be a subordinate class, oppressed and exploited by capital.

11. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, “real socialism” collapsed, the revisionism that had usurped power in the former socialist countries.
12. For the Marxist-Leninists these events meant the failure of revisionism, its inability to stay in power, and a victory of U.S. and European imperialism. However, for the great masses of the workers and the peoples, for the youth it was seen as the collapse of the revolution and socialism. Ideological confusion spread on a large scale and the revolutionary outlook darkened.
13. Today's events reveal the serious damage caused by revisionism to the communist formations and the workers; and trade union movement.
14. The most significant impacts are of an ideological and political nature:

The transformation of the Communist Party of the USSR into a revisionist formation. The effect of this change in all the communist parties persists in the minds of the working class, making the responsibility and tasks of the Marxist-Leninist communist parties more complex and difficult.

The disappearance of the USSR, which had become the concrete expression of socialism, of the ideals of the working class and the peoples, which had become a great country, affected the subjectivity and consciousness of the working class and the peoples, they become obstacles to the organization and struggle for the revolution and socialism, for the work of the Marxist-Leninists.

15. There are great difficulties for the building of communist parties based firmly on Marxism-Leninism, involved in the life and struggle of the workers, battle-hardened and daring, with the ability and willingness to fulfill the historical responsibilities of organizing and making the revolution.

These difficulties are of an ideological and political nature, they have to do with the politics of the bourgeoisie and reaction, but, fundamentally, with the ability of proletarian revolutionaries to follow the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, to draw up a correct and timely revolutionary policy, to actively involve themselves in the workers' and popular movement.

16. The damage caused by revisionism is serious; it had a serious impact on the workers' and popular movement, on the ranks of

the revolutionaries and communists, but they are not insurmountable.

Capitalism has not been and will not be able to resolve the great and serious problems of thousands of millions of workers; imperialism does not have the capacity to indefinitely maintain the chains of dependence on the countries and peoples.

The exploitation of capital over labor has to be broken in order to give rise to the new society, imperialist domination must be destroyed. The workers and the peoples, the youth are the protagonists of these great feats. We proletarian revolutionaries, communists are present and with the guidance of Marxism-Leninism we will clear the paths and advance and, in some country, where the contradictions of capitalism are exacerbated, where the Party has roots in the proletariat and the determination and strength it will be able to involve itself in the revolutionary situation and transform it into a revolutionary crisis for the seizure of power.

The experiences of the victorious revolutions, the lessons of the defeats suffered by the proletariat must be taken into account in order to fulfill, in our times, the responsibility of organizing and making the revolution.

Ecuador, October 2020

“For a Revolutionary Rupture with the System”

In January 2020, our Party held its 9th Congress. On the agenda of its work, the report of the activity of the Central Committee made a critical and self-critical assessment of the orientations during the last four years. The delegates also discussed a document analyzing the international and national situation. That document concluded with a text putting forward the “political axes of rupture with the capitalist imperialist system”. We publish that text below¹.

Since January, the situation has changed: in March the health crisis linked to the pandemic Covid 19 has extended to France and worldwide. The government had decided on confinement from mid-March to mid-May, deepening and broadening the pre-existing economic crisis. The extent and the depth of that crisis and its consequences for the workers, the masses and the peoples dominated by French imperialism, are still difficult to measure. What is certain is that that crisis is aggravating all the contradictions of the capitalist imperialist system, especially the contradiction between Capital and Labor. The contestation of the system, which has gained broader sectors of the social movement, especially of the youth, has deepened in relation to the catastrophic handling of the health crisis by Macron’s government. Indeed, the conditions of the class struggle are more difficult today. Each day, dismissals are announced; the rate of unemployment is exploding, precariousness is broadening; repression is focused on trade unionists and political militants; the government is developing a systematic policy of division. But the billions of money given to the monopolies to help them to maintain their profits are fueling the anger against a system which wants to maintain itself at any costs.

¹ The whole text, that is the analysis and orientations adopted by the Congress, has been edited into a book in March 2020, titled: “For a Revolutionary Rupture with the System”. That document is available in French and English (in print and electronic format). It is available from the editorial board of “En Avant” or on our webpage: www.pcof.net.

What we can see today is that reference to revolution as a necessity to get rid of the system of exploitation and oppression is finding an ever greater echo among the workers in struggle.

This means that the changes in the situation since our last Congress in January are giving more force and actuality to the general axis of work that we have fixed for ourselves: “make the consciousness of the necessity and possibility of the revolutionary rupture with the capitalist imperialist system grow.” That is what the text below is developing.

The political axes of rupture with the capitalist-imperialist system

The analysis of the development of the national and international situation since our last Congress highlights the depth of the crisis of the world imperialist system and especially that of French imperialism. We wish to emphasize four main aspects:

- **The radicalism of the class struggle in France**, is due to the social anger of the working class and the popular masses, and is extending to a growing number of social strata. It is expressed by stronger and stronger concrete demands, and the ability to develop a global vision of the situation leading to the denunciation of the “system”. It is seen above all in street demonstrations organized outside the framework of bourgeois institutions, in particular elections, political representation and parliamentary democracy, in forms of struggle that break with prohibitions and taboos, such as the one that forbids the use of violence.
- **From the side of the oligarchy, the large-scale strengthening of the police state**, mass repression, criminalization of social protest, surveillance and control of “dangerous classes” are developing. The policy adopted consists of creating divisions in all areas, of developing individualism, and promoting the most reactionary ideas around.
- **The increasingly massive and systematic opposition to the military presence of French imperialism in Africa** and its political, economic and cultural mechanisms of domination by the peoples who are subjected to it.
- **The difficulties encountered by French monopolies in the international competition**, including in the sectors where they had won advantageous positions, such as in nuclear power, the

food industry, in other sectors, and even the military-industrial complex. These difficulties are aggravated by the crisis which affected the whole European Union, which is the privileged framework of the development of the French monopolies since the beginning of the process of European integration.

These characteristics are not temporary, and are not separated one from the other. This means that we are entering a period of tension and confrontation, of rapid change, both on the side of the bourgeoisie and on that of the proletariat, the popular masses and the peoples. In the general context of the crisis of the capitalist imperialist system, the difficulties peculiar to French imperialism push it to increase the super-exploitation of the working class and the working masses, the oppression of the popular masses and to reinforce the imperialist plunder and domination over the peoples, in order to guarantee the profits of the monopolies.

The race for maximum profits is clearly the engine and goal of the capitalist imperialist system. The state's function is to guarantee the profits of the monopolies, in France and abroad, in the colonies and neo-colonies. It is the monopolies which control the CAC 40; they drain public investments, benefit from the tax advantages and accumulate profits².

In 2011, we described the monopolies or the large groups as follows³:

"The monopolies and the companies which depend on them directly or indirectly, and the subcontracting companies which themselves tend to become monopolies, control more than 70% of production, 100% of finance, the entire energy sector, and almost all transport, communications, the trade in products of mass consumption and practically the entire transformation of agriculture production into consumer goods. They monopolize all the arms sales of the states, pushing the militarization of the economy even further.

² The eight richest French companies are: Total (103.3 bn), BNP (61 bn), Sanofi (51.3 bn), AXA (44 bn), LVMH (39.4 bn), L'Oréal (31, 1 bn), Société Générale (27.2 bn), EDF (26.9 bn). Figures are the accumulated profit during the past ten years. Source: *Café de la Bourse*, June 2019.

³ *For a Revolutionary Popular Front Now*, January 2011.

“They organize and orient production, trade and research to guarantee their profits and not to satisfy the needs of the popular masses. They seize most of the wealth produced and mobilize the human and material resources of society. They bear the main responsibility for the environmental damage and hope to make major profits from getting rid of the pollution as well. The heightened competition among them, nationally and internationally, is responsible for wars for the control of raw materials and markets. The race for maximum profit is the main factor in the huge waste caused by the so-called consumer society. This is why we say that we must fight against the diktat of the monopolies.”

What has changed since then? There has been a deeper concentration of monopoly, a succession of reforms allowing the monopolies to increase the exploitation of the labor force (El Khomri law, Macron’s decrees, etc.), a series of privatizations allowing private groups to get their hands on strategic sectors, the elimination of regulations and controls of the activities of these same monopolies, which lead to "accidents" of the Lubrizol type⁴, the considerable transfers of wealth, taken from social budgets, to banks, companies in strategic sectors, etc. With the reform of the pension system announced at the end of 2019, a new short- and long-term drain on pension money⁵ was being organized.

All these transfers, described as savings essential to reduce the state deficit, all these tax breaks are carried out on the backs of the workers, the unemployed, the retirees, the users of services that are increasingly less "public", in health care, education, transport, housing, social protection, and other sectors. For dozens of years, the employers aimed at getting rid of the “social state”⁶ through counter

⁴ Explosion at a chemical enterprise, in the industrial zone of Rouen, leading to contamination on a large scale, September 2019.

⁵ In 2017, there were 17.2 million retirees. The total sum of pensions paid (including the minimum retirement pension) was € 317.1 billion, or 13.8% of GDP.

⁶ In 2012, Kessler, vice-president of the Movement of the Enterprises of France (MEDEF) (1998-2002), expressed this old demand of the employers. Since World War II, the French employers have constantly opposed the system of distribution of social wealth set up at that time, then the balance of power was favorable to Labor against Capital.

reforms; in other words, to reduce as much as possible the share of social wealth that Capital has to dedicate to maintain and renew the labor force by spending on education, health care, social protection, social housing, public transport, vocational training, culture, and others sectors.

These counter-reforms have been carried out by socialist governments, right-wing governments and today by the Macron and Philippe⁷ government, which claims to be "at the same time" of the right and left. Social democracy has capitulated to the diktat of monopolies by totally rallying behind the neoliberal policy, by managing the interests of French imperialism and even resorting to armed intervention, and the repression of the workers' and popular movements, especially the movement against the El Khomri law. Thus, social democracy has been rejected by large sectors of the working class and popular masses. This rejection is not limited to elections: it affects the institutional system itself, which allows the alternation or "cohabitation" in office of the majorities of the right and left, which gives constantly more power to the executive, which is under the control and rule of "agreements" and international bodies (EU, NATO, IMF, etc.).

Social democracy has supported European integration as a "third way" between "savage" capitalism and socialism, or much more towards communism, which it hates. It has promoted "United Europe" as the guarantor of peace, especially in Europe. This is why the crisis in European integration is particularly affected.

In recent years, social protests have shown the above-mentioned characteristics. This is expressed by the "rejection" first of the politicians "all of them rotten" then of Macron, who is widely perceived as the president of the rich, the wealthy and by the general accusation of the "system", but without a clear definition of its nature. One of the major tasks of our Party in the political and ideological struggle is therefore to raise the level of consciousness about the nature of the capitalist-imperialist system.

**Transform social anger into consciousness of the need
to break with the capitalist imperialist system**

The depth of the crisis and the brutality with which the oligarchy wants to make the workers, the popular masses and the peoples

⁷ Philippe was Macron's prime minister.

pay for it demands that every struggle, even a partial one, even one limited to a concrete demand (such as for example the creation of new jobs in hospitals or schools, against the closing of a railroad line, or simply for the opening of a counter, etc.) is important in order to build this important balance of power,.

It is not a question of "proving" to Capital, the oligarchy and the state at their service that these demands are justified and that they would be gain by answering the workers' demands, as the reformist forces do with their "alternative propositions" that leave the workers stuck within the capitalist-imperialist system. This road is a dead end. For almost 40 years, the reformist dogma has led to social setbacks, which has led reformists to declare that the workers' and popular movement has "gained nothing" with their struggles. On the contrary, in the constant struggles waged by the workers', trade union and popular movements to counter the blows inflicted by Capital through the reformist governments serving the interests of the monopolies, important sectors have become more and more detached from reformism and from the parties and organizations that support it.

These struggles are developing the consciousness of the need to challenge the entire social, economic and political system.

Targeting the monopolies and the state at their service

For two years, the main political orientation of our work has been summarized in the slogan:

“Fight this society for the rich, the bosses and the arms merchants! For a revolutionary break!”



We have seen the strengthening of the police state and the criminalization of social protest, the development of policy of war, the militarization of the economy and of society in general, the military interventions, particularly in Africa, the growing weight of the monopolies which live on the back of society, plunder it, suffocate it, in order to guarantee their profits and fatten the big shareholders. This highlights the role of the State. It has been reduced more and more to its so-called "royal" functions [the three functions of the state according to Adam Smith – *translator's note*], that is the functions of repression – army, police and justice – in order to guarantee the domination of monopolies.

It is against the state of the monopolies and the monopolies themselves that we must focus the fight.

This is why the working class and the working masses need their tools: the Party and the mass organizations. Among these, the union is an essential organization.

We defend class-struggle trade unionism, which is today the target of attacks from the employers and the government. We call for the development of this type of unionism, which gives priority to the interests of industrial and other workers, which refuses to tie their hands to the institutions of class collaboration aimed at improving the competitiveness of the enterprise. It is a unionism that fights all forms of division among the workers, those with or without papers, for the unity between the different categories of workers, in particular between those who work at the same workplace but are exploited by subcontractors or temporary agencies; a unionism which seeks to organize the so-called "independent" sectors, in particular of young people, which is in reality a relationship of subordination under those the orders; a unionism which integrates the struggle for equality between women and men at the workplace and in society, which fights against the different types of discrimination of which women are victims; a unionism which develops solidarity with those who struggle, in France or elsewhere, with particular attention to the workers in the French colonies and those in the African neo-colonies; a unionism which seeks to form bonds of struggle and solidarity with the workers of Europe who are subjected to the same neoliberal policies.

It is the role of the working class party to raise consciousness of the need for a revolutionary break and to gain the political leadership of this fight.

What is the working class party for? The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* answers this question in particular. The party's objectives have not been called into question by the most modern technological developments based on computers, electronics and digitalization. These technologies give the illusion that commodities are made without any process of production and without human labor. A proof to the contrary is the huge infrastructure necessary for their operation, the enormous quantity of energy that they consume and the battalions of workers and technicians needed for their operation. In all the economic fields, maintenance has taken on a considerable scale, due in particular to the complexity of the instruments of production, which are very vulnerable. These questions need to be deepened, to show both the quantitative and qualitative development of the working class and its essential role in the creation of value, the basis of capitalist profit. This is one of the tasks to which our Party will take on, by mobilizing its theoretical weapon, Marxism Leninism, its activists, particularly the worker activists, all its friends and those around it who can contribute to this work.

Win people to the Party

Our line is to raise and share consciousness of the need for a revolutionary break. Winning more workers, men and women, young people from the popular masses, young revolutionaries to the Party is the condition for moving forward on this path.

The political orientation that we put forward

We call for **resistance to the police state** which represses those who fight. It strikes them and maims them, it criminalizes social protest, it guarantees impunity to the police, it protects the interests of the employers. Faced with the class violence of the bourgeoisie, let us oppose the right of the working class and people to organize and to defend themselves.

We are fighting for the repeal of successive repressive laws that were adopted under the pretext of the "fight against terrorism", for the prohibition of the LBD, a weapon of war, and of anti-encirclement grenades, responsible for dozens of wounded. We demand the dissolution of the brigades of rapid response police.

We are fighting against the rise of reaction, the trivialization of the far right, the promotion of backward concepts in all areas.

We support the fight of women and men against the violence inflicted on women, against the attempts to eliminate their rights, in particular regarding abortion and the control of their bodies.

We are fighting against all the policies, ideas, practices used to divide the working class and the popular masses, such as racism and xenophobia. We fight **Islamophobia** and all the attempts to divide communities. We denounce the policy of ghettoization and discrimination suffered by young people in the popular cities.

We are calling for the struggle **to defend the public services** for their social utility that benefit the users among the popular masses, in the services of health care, education, social protection, housing, transport, culture, information, etc. These must be kept from the appetite of the monopolies. Those that have been privatized must be returned to the public domain, without compensation. These sectors, deprived of human and material resources for years, must become a national priority.

We are fighting the big costly, useless and polluting works demanded by the monopolies against the wishes and the interests of the people. These projects, which have multiplied, are primarily intended to fill the orders of large construction groups, the banks, monopolies of large distribution, etc. Several multi-billion projects have been blocked by popular mobilizations, and people must remain vigilant to counter the maneuvers of circumvention of the monopolies.

Against the main culprits responsible for pollution and climate change

We call for strengthening the struggle to impose concrete financial and industrial measures on the polluting monopolies. For us, the fight against the causes and consequences of climate change is part of the general struggle against the capitalist-imperialist system.

We are for putting an end to the civil and military nuclear industry. In our country, the military-industrial lobby and the nuclear lobby are intimately linked. They reinforce and "justify" each other faced with the challenge that has targeted them for years. They constitute two pillars of French imperialism, which provide it with nuclear weapons, making it a great power, and therefore they are an integral part of the imperialist system of economic plunder and military domination, in order to have access to the uranium de-

posits of the countries of the Sahel. We also oppose these same countries being used as storage locations for nuclear waste.

No to militarization and the politics of war

We are calling for a struggle against the growing weight of the army in society. We are in favor of a drastic reduction in arms expenditures, whether conventional or nuclear. We are fighting against the conditioning of the youth through the "universal national service" and against the increased presence of the Army in the schools and in the world of learning.

We denounce and demand the end of arms sales and the accompanying maintenance contracts. The weight of the military-industrial lobby is a constant threat to society, especially since it only "deals" with the executive and more particularly the head of state and the "defense committee".

No to the Europe of monopolies!

We refuse to participate in or endorse any policy or mechanism which aims at bringing European integration out of the crisis which is plaguing it. **We are in favor of leaving the EU, the euro**, which are shackles on the workers and peoples. We are for the development of solidarity among the peoples of Europe and the whole world.

We fight French imperialism and we stand in solidarity with the people it dominates

We stand in solidarity with the peoples of Africa who are fighting against the military, economic, financial and cultural presence of French imperialism; against the plunder of their wealth by the French monopolies; against the stranglehold of the EU.

We denounce the argument that the French presence would be preferable to that of China, Russia or any other state. It is up to the peoples to decide their own future, the relationships they want to establish with other countries.

We demand the unconditional withdrawal of French military bases and the abrogation of the so-called treaties of assistance, which only protect the regimes which collaborate with French imperialism.

We denounce and oppose the wars in which French imperialism takes part, in the framework of international alliances. We call for

strengthening the struggle for the withdrawal of France from NATO, for the dissolution of this military alliance and we oppose any form of "European defense", which will necessarily be an instrument of threat and repression against the people.

We stand in solidarity with the peoples of the French colonies and defend their right to self-determination; that of the Kanak people who continue to demand their independence and that of the other peoples of the French colonies. They are the only ones who can decide the forms it will take, knowing that the colonial metropolis has duties of reparation towards them.

We struggle against the support by French imperialism to the Zionist state of Israel and we support the struggle of the Palestinian people for their national rights.

In conclusion

These are the political orientations that we have set. The struggle to implement them cannot wait. A race is underway between the forces of progress, the democratic, anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces, on the one hand, and those of reaction, the oligarchy and its state, on the other. The working class, the popular masses, the youth, the women from the popular strata and other sectors are showing great potential through their mobilizations. In this period of rapid development of the movement, it is necessary to work hard to bring together the maximum of the forces and to build the revolutionary leadership necessary to develop it and to lead it to a growing number of victories.

The general orientation of our work over the next four years is to raise consciousness of the need and possibility of a revolutionary break with the capitalist imperialist system and to work for this without delay. This revolutionary break is the condition for concretely paving the way to the building of another society, a socialist society, towards communism.

This strategic objective is the aspiration for which, at home and in the world, we Communists are fighting, to liberate Humanity from capitalist exploitation, pillage and imperialist domination, for the emancipation of the workers and peoples.

September 2020

“Covid and the Question of Value”

The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as "an immense accumulation of commodities", its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity.

“A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another. The nature of such wants, whether, for instance, they spring from the stomach or from fancy, makes no difference. Neither are we here concerned to know how the object satisfies these wants, whether directly as means of subsistence, or indirectly as means of production.” (Karl Marx, “Capital, Book I,” *Marx Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 45.)

So wealth exists in capitalist society only when something is bought and sold, when it becomes a commodity.

The Covid crisis gives numerous examples of this.

According to the prognoses of the "committee of experts" of the Federal Government, on June 23, 2020, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will decrease by about 6.5% this year. The Institute of the German Economy (IW) even expects a slump of 9% for Germany and 4% worldwide.

The GDP includes everything that is bought and sold in the country. Only this is counted as a "value" in capitalist society.

But this concept of value is perverse and corresponds only to the interests of the capitalist economic order.

Karl Marx distinguishes between use value and exchange value but he makes it clear that exchange value is only a surface, a manifestation of a third thing, value, the necessary labor power for a product. Marx: "...exchange value, generally, is only the mode of expression, the phenomenal form, of something contained in it, yet distinguishable from it." (Karl Marx, “Capital, Book I,” *Marx Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 47.) Only when something appears as a commodity does it have exchange value, the basis of which is value. In our contribution we are not concerned with all

aspects of value and exchange value, but with a comparison of use value and exchange value.

For people who, for example, buy fruit, the use value is in the foreground. Things must "satisfy human needs of some kind". The people do not buy things to make more money, but to consume them to satisfy needs. The relationship of capital to things is quite different. The capitalist buys a load of tomatoes not to consume them, but to sell them at a profit if possible. If a person buys an apartment to live in, the capitalist buys as many apartments as his capital allows and the market makes sense for him, in order to make more money – by renting or reselling and speculating.

In the Covid crisis this different relationship to products became clearly visible.

If, for example, a worker bought prepared food during his lunch break before Corona, this preparation increased the GDP and thus the economic value. If the same people cooked and ate their own food at home during the lockdown, this is not of value in terms of capitalism. The wealth of society is not increased by this. But perhaps the food tastes better, is prepared in a healthier manner – and thus is more valuable for the person who eats it with pleasure. But this is "only" a use value. It can be just as good or even better than the food you buy, but it does not become an exchange value and is therefore economically worthless for capital! This applies, of course, only to the end product, the food prepared in the home kitchen. The necessary commodities – food, water, gas or electricity etc. – are usually bought and increase the GDP.

This is true for many things. During the lockdown, people did not sit around idly. Some apartments were renovated, the house was repaired, gardens were tended. None of this is included in the GDP. If people had performed wage labor and, for example, hired and paid a painter to renovate the apartment, this would have increased the GDP. If they do it themselves with a lot of effort and pleasure, it is worthless for capital and does not go into the GDP, except for the purchased building materials.

This is grotesque with solidarity help. In Stuttgart, VfB (local soccer club) fans provided free neighborhood help for the elderly. They bought things for them, brought medicine and much more. If they had founded a "Service Company" and demanded money for their "services", this would have gone into the GDP and increased it. But since they did not ask for money, they contributed to the de-

cline in the GDP. How many millions helped others during this time, did so before the crisis and will continue to do so? But mutual solidarity aid does not create value in the sense of capital. The whole thing as a business model, as a home service or nursing service gets the cycle of money going, makes profits possible and increases the GDP. Being humane is worthless for capital.

The many-sided exploitation of women also becomes blatantly obvious. If she worked before, brought her child to a day-care center for a fee, paid for the food there and ate it herself in the canteen, all this was naturally included in the GDP as a value. If she now sits at home, makes a home office, looks after the children "on the side" and cooks for the family, then only her work in the home office is included in the GDP as a value. Everything else is worth nothing from the perspective of the capitalist economy! Thus two thirds of her work is considered worthless. She works for three, but only counts once. For the children, of course, the care provided by the mother is worth something. Food is probably more valuable, too. But this value, the use value, does not count in the GDP. Only what can be bought counts. However, capital gladly accepts the unpaid work of many women as a free gift to reduce the necessary wage, which is supposed to enable the reproduction of the commodity labor-power.

An example of the absurdity of capitalist logic: if someone bakes a cake, first the baking ingredients go into GDP; everything else does not. If a person eats half of the cake with his family,



he/she has not created value in the sense of capital with the work done. If he/she gives the other half of the cake to a party for a club or similar association for sale so that the club can finance its work, the cake sold goes into the GDP. And if the club uses the money it collects to buy something again, this increases the GDP as well.

If one added up everything that people did at home or in helping neighbors during the Corona crisis and include it in the GDP, it would probably not decrease at all or only by 1-2%. Because in fact people created a lot of things that were valuable to them during this time.

Disgusting is this "evaluation" by capital in such areas as sexuality. If people in the Corona crisis spent more time together, had more time for each other and had more sex with each other, this did not represent any value for capital. What is valuable for people and an expression of deep intimacy and affection does not count for capital. But if these people go to a prostitute or prostitute themselves, money flows, and this increases the GDP. Society has supposedly become "richer" and "more prosperous"! How disgusting and perverse is such an economic system! The point is not that something is valuable for people, but that it makes profits possible.

The absurdity of capitalist calculation becomes even more obvious in the field of culture during the crisis. The whole cultural industry with all its excesses was in ruins. But the need for culture was still there, both for the artists and for their viewers and listeners. Under capitalism, art and culture are also a commodity. It must be sold and bought. As a rule, this means that a few stars become millionaires – and with them the cultural corporations that have them under contract. Whether actors, painters, sculptors, singers – only those who bring in a lot of money are important. A whole industry of studios, event companies, suppliers, etc. is attached to them. The bigger the event, the higher the profit. During the crisis many artists, especially ones who were not so famous, were very creative. They offered internet concerts, posted on YouTube and Facebook, gave concerts via Jitsi or Zoom. Pictures, even whole exhibitions could be visited via the internet. Writers gave readings on YouTube, Facebook, Jitsi or Zoom. Some organized concerts in backyards. They met with a great response from their audience. Suddenly everything was free of charge. However, many spectators and listeners were willing to donate for the livelihood of the artists. In addition, there were spontaneous relief actions for artists who

now had few opportunities and hardly any income. For many people, culture is worth something, even if they do not receive an immediate "benefit" in return. Gone was the mediation and mastery of a music industry. The relationship between artists and audience became more direct and immediate, even if the contact was mostly via the Internet and at a distance. The need for culture opened up new paths.

Thus the Corona crisis is an occasion to reflect on value and to learn more about Karl Marx and his critique of capitalism. The capitalist system, which in the past had certainly led to a revolutionary development, is now worn out and rotten. It has perverted and turned all human categories into their opposite. Therefore this system must disappear and be replaced by a socialist system in which the needs of working people are the measure of the development of the economy and society.

"Let us now picture to ourselves, by way of change, a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour power of the community. All the characteristics of Robinson's labour are here repeated, but with this difference, that they are social, instead of individual. Everything produced by him was exclusively the result of his own personal labour, and therefore simply an object of use for himself. The total product of our community is a social product. One portion serves as fresh means of production and remains social. But another portion is consumed by the members as means of subsistence. A distribution of this portion amongst them is consequently necessary. The mode of this distribution will vary with the productive organisation of the community, and the degree of historical development attained by the producers. We will assume, but merely for the sake of a parallel with the production of commodities, that the share of each individual producer in the means of subsistence is determined by his labour time. Labour time would, in that case, play a double part. Its apportionment in accordance with a definite social plan maintains the proper proportion between the different kinds of work to be done and the various wants of the community. On the other hand, it also serves as a measure of the portion of the common labour borne by each individual, and of his share in the part of the total product destined for individual consumption. The social relations of the individual producers, with re-

gard both to their labour and to its products, are in this case perfectly simple and intelligible, and that with regard not only to production but also to distribution.”

(Karl Marx, “Capital, Book 1”, *Marx Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 89-90.)

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Covid 19 and the Working Classes

The global pandemic has exposed the underbellies of capitalism and the gargantuan states it has erected in its defence. Never before have the wheels of capitalist production, commerce and banking ground to a halt as now. Never before have the states' abilities to govern and enforce laws been so drastically paralysed. Never before in the last two centuries has the natural world breathed a sigh of relief as it has now, as it gears up to heal the damages inflicted on it by global capitalism. This unprecedented crisis quite clearly is a making of the new wave of 'neo-liberal' globalisation which was initiated in the 1990s as the solution to recurrent capitalist slumps. The integration of the world, massive dependence upon Chinese manufactories, global supply and market and labour chains, capitalism's attempts to finally flatten the earth has created the conditions for this massive eruption of viral attack. The rapid global spread of a virus which originated in the Wuhan province of China is indeed a direct consequence of the global integration based on the critical role played by Chinese manufactory.

On the face of it, this is a global revolutionary moment, when capitalist production and state are no longer in a position to 'carry on as before' and so are the vast masses of people – working people who produce and consume and keep the capitalist system going. As millions of people across the world are rendered unemployed the only way they can access necessities of life is through 'extra economic means' outside the market system – either through doles, state intervention or through looting as the American working classes have demonstrated in the current rapid spread of rioting in the cities of USA. So much for neoliberal capitalism's claim to be able to address all needs through the mechanism of market. The world cannot go back happily to five years ago and live happily ever afterwards!

What will be the contours which will shape up to determine the future of the world? As things stand it would appear that the forces of capitalism and its states are most organised and conscious and seem to be in the driving seat. That is how it appeared in 1914-17 too. That is because the revolutionary response of the masses com-

pelled by the impossibility of continuing living and working as before is only beginning to surface sporadically. The vast out-migrations of the Indian workers from the cities, the riot and looting in the USA, may just be the proverbial straws in the wind. As in 1917-19 when the working classes across the globe appeared poorly organised but managed with remarkable outburst of revolutionary energies to actively participate in reshaping the world, we can hope that the future will not be as the global lords of capital would want it to be. There appears one significant difference though: the working class had a beacon of light in Marxism and Leninist organisation, which has considerably dimmed in the intervening century. But then there are multiple lamps, albeit of very modest light, which is illuminating a very complex world and we can hope that the working classes will once more display the revolutionary energy to make a new sense of the world and organise to change it.

But that may lie in the future. As we said before the capitalists and the states are still in the driving seat and true to their nature of being ‘shroud stealers’ (*kafan chor* as the Hindustani phrase will put it) are trying to make the best of the most intense tragedy faced by humanity as lakhs [hundreds of thousands] of people across the globe are losing their lives to the virus and millions are left to face slow death by starvation and deprivation.

In this write up we will take up the response of the Indian state, its capitalist class, and the working classes to the current pandemic and the situation arising from it.

It may be recalled that the current BJP led government faced one of the most powerful protest movements in recent times against its policy of communal divide and pogroms against minorities, especially the Muslims. Its hurried enactment of a law allowing it to selectively confer citizenship on non Muslims from neighbouring Muslim majority countries, the social havoc caused by the exercise of checking the citizenship claims of people living in Assam and the threat of extending it to the rest of the country was meant to isolate and target Muslim minorities. Instead, it brought together youth and women belonging to minority communities, dalits, adivasis and all other communities, especially in the universities and led to massive sit in protests. The BJP lost elections in a string of state assembly elections the latest being Jharkhand and the key state of Delhi where it fared pretty poorly. Its repressive measures and campaign to malign the protestors as anti-national clearly had backfired. Thus the

pandemic came as a godsend to the beleaguered government which clamped down on the entire country using emergency laws framed by the erstwhile colonial masters more than a century and quarter ago in the wake of an outbreak of plague. State action and fear of the virus forced a closure on the protests and sit ins across the country, especially in Delhi. As the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act wound up, the government relentlessly pursued the leaders of the movement by arresting them and jailing them under inhuman conditions and the Covid 19 threat. Hundreds of activists have been rounded up since then in the states of UP, Delhi etc.

The pandemic has also provided the Indian state with an opportunity to assume enormous powers of surveillance over and control over movement and the very bodies of the citizens. Instead of strengthening the collapsing public and private health care system, the government seized the opportunity to use artificial intelligence and such like technologies to monitor the movement and conversations of private citizens. Of course this is in line with the worldwide phenomenon initiated by the Chinese state. At least in the case of China this was matched by its preparedness to handle the pandemic in terms of both health care and effective planned lock down. In India on the other hand the health care and sanitation systems have been in a poor shape even to handle normal situation, as the public health care system was systematically dismantled in favour of privatisation with a fraudulent scheme for insurance cover for the poor. The public sanitation system, condemned by the caste based ideology to be the sector which was least modernised, as it was principally manned by dalit workers, just couldn't cope with the massive task of keeping the cities and villages clean.

As the central government announced a complete lock down without any adequate planning or consultation with state or local administrations, the principal task of keeping the country going fell upon the health care workers, the sanitation workers and the police force, all of them ill equipped to handle the task without any training, adequate protective gear or replacement at work. This resulted in thousands of them getting infected and bearing the brunt of not only the pandemic but also social ostracism by an insensitive middle class. It should be remembered that most of these health and sanitation workers are on contractual and informal tenures without any legal or social security cover. The same can be said of workers in the so called essential services and sectors, petty shopkeepers,

vendors – who had to continue to render service under lock down conditions even as the malls and ‘online’ shopping platforms closed down into safety. The lock down essentially protected the urban middle classes as it is this class that was privileged to stay home and get paid for it.

The lockdown meant complete stoppage of work in all industrial units (the ‘non-essential’ ones), transport including railways and roadways and more important in the vast informal and self-employed sectors of work which provide livelihood to about 90% of the urban population. Since the lock down continued to be extended for over three months, it has led to loss of employment and income for millions of urban and rural poor. While the rural sector was somewhat spared and the annual spring harvest was completed across the country, it was the urban sector that saw an unprecedented collapse. The employers used this opportunity to abscond without paying the wage arrears of their employees, most of whom, it should be noted, do not have any formal agreement or documentation. For example a ‘phone’ survey conducted by the e magazine, The Wire, of Delhi’s labouring population reported that nearly half the respondents had not received full wages for the pre lock down month and over 90% reported complete work stoppage and 80% reported complete loss of any income during the lock down period.

A study conducted by Azim Premji University and other organisations reported massive unemployment and loss of earnings as a result of the lock down. Loss of employment was the worst for the self-employed in urban areas, with 84 per cent of them losing employment, compared with 76 per cent salaried workers and 81 per cent casual workers. In rural areas, 66 per cent casual wage workers reported loss of employment, followed by 62 per cent of salaried workers and 47 per cent of rural workers.

Average weekly earnings for non-agricultural self-employed workers who were still employed fell by over 90 per cent from Rs 2,240 [1 rupee is \$0.013 US] to Rs 218. For casual workers who were still employed, average weekly earnings almost halved from Rs 940 in February to Rs 495 during lockdown, the survey noted. Half of all salaried workers, or 51 per cent, saw either a cut in their salary or received no salary.

Nearly half (49 per cent) of households reported that they did not have enough money to buy even a week’s worth of essential items, while 80 per cent of urban households and 70 per cent in ru-

ral areas reported consuming less food than before. As per the survey, over one-third, or 36 per cent, of vulnerable households in urban India received at least one cash transfer from the government, while 53 per cent of rural households received this benefit.

Denied pay for the work done in the past month or week and faced with an indefinite loss of employment the workers, casual workers and the self employed faced pauperism and starvation. Added to this was the harassment by landlords of their shacks, who demanded rent and were also keen to get rid of the poor who were considered potential carriers of the virus. The state governments indeed intervened, somewhat slowly, by providing direct cash transfer and free ration to ration card holders and free kitchen in many areas. However, given the scale of people requiring such assistance, the coverage was highly inadequate, particularly since the number of documented workers with ration cards and bank accounts is but a fraction of the total number of workers.

The most vulnerable in this of course were the migrant workers. We really do not have any figures to understand the scale of the problem. The ten year old census figure for 2011 tells us that were 57 million interstate migrant workers in the country. A majority of such migrants work in the informal/unorganised sector; a large number are daily wagers and very few have any form of identification or employment papers. This figure does not include workers who have been migrating within the states, from the villages to the towns or mining districts or brick kilns or for harvesting/transplanting. Most of these workers are not really ‘free wage-



labourers' but bonded workers, who have been paid a paltry advance by contractors who then sell their services to prospective employers, whether industrial, agricultural or builders. Quite often the contract involves entire families including women and children. They are usually made to live at worksites with poor arrangements for food or sleep or sanitation. Labour historians like Jan Breman have remarked that unlike the 18-19th century industrialization which saw permanent migration of rural workers into towns, the present migrations are temporary (usually contracted for a season or two) after which the workers go back to their villages to do similar seasonal work there before they are engaged again by the contractors. This oscillation between villages and distant towns happens under conditions of debt bondage, which implies a loss of choice in employment or free negotiation. The employers and contractors usually do not pay the workers their full wages so as to keep them under leash.

Technically they are protected by the “Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979”. The act provides for the contractors who lure these migrants, enticing them with the promise of fulfilling their dreams, are required under the Act to obtain a license from an authority both of the state to which the workman belongs (home state), as also the one in which they are proposed to be employed (host state). Establishments hiring them are also required to obtain a certificate of registration before employing them. The Act stipulates that the license may contain conditions regarding the arrangements under which the inter-state migrant will be recruited, the remuneration payable, hours of work, fixation of wages and other essential amenities to be provided. There is an explicit provision regarding the wages to be paid to these migrant workmen, the date from which it is due, and their entitlement to a displacement allowance. Suitable residential accommodation, adequate medical facilities and protective clothing are also amongst what is to be provided. Needless to say that the noble provisions of this act are not implemented and the labour departments have neither the capacity nor the willingness to intervene and regulate the labour trafficking. It is these workers who became the most severely affected by the unplanned lock down announced by the central government. Given the loss of wages, of employment prospects of residing indefinitely in a hostile environment, vast masses of migrant workers sought to return to their homes, usually

in distant villages thousands of kilometres away. Those who enforced the lock down were perhaps not even aware of the existence of such people and had definitely not planned for them. Their imagination was confined to the urban middle class families, safe in their pucca homes. Without any ration cards or identity cards, these workers did not have any entitlement to rations or monetary assistance. Soon enough as the workers defied the lock down and descended upon the streets, did the powers that be realise that there were these migrants who wanted to go home. The first response of the state was of course to prevent any such exodus for that would cripple the prospects of economic revival. They had all the power to prevent it, curfew, prohibitory orders under section 144 of Indian Penal Act, extraordinary powers to the police to detain and incarcerate violators of the lock down etc. All kinds of transport including road and rail were shut down. Yet as workers streamed out into the highways, it was obvious that the flood was unstoppable. They were hungry, thirsty, sick, with sore feet, carrying loads on heads and children on shoulders, walking away hoping to reach home or die in the effort, something better than to die of starvation in a hostile city environment. Soon panic gripped the state, that these dense crowds that were thronging the roads were potential carriers of the virus to all over the country. The police were deployed to beat them up and send them back. Soon the tide began to rise and yet the state had no idea of how to deal with it. All that it could do was to harass them on the way and when they actually reached their own states, insult them as was done in the UP town of where they were made to sit on the roads and disinfectants splashed over them or quarantined under inhuman conditions.

The migrant workers almost walked out of the cities to which they had come to work, often saying that they were so badly treated by them that they will never return to them. This thus was not only an act of desperation but also one of protest and rejection.

Much later when it became evident that this was a human tragedy of colossal proportions, the government began operating special trains. By 4th June, the Railways claim to have transported nearly six million migrant workers to their homes. Interestingly this figure is far in excess of the numbers given by the ministry of labour for total number of inter-state migrant workers in the country. In fact, this is more than double of the labour ministry figure of 2.6 million.

It may be added that the only state which appears to have adopted a somewhat humane approach towards the migrants, was Kerala. Thus even the labour ministry usually hostile to the state that nearly 1.5 lakh migrant workers were housed in shelters provided by the state government and as many were in living in work sites. Those who wanted to go back home were provided with state transport buses along with provisions. One must also underline the help provided by NGOs which organised innumerable help lines and medical and food assistance to the migrants walking back home. These were being done at great personal risk by the volunteers of these organisations.

As the lock-down proceeded, its deep economic impact, loss of employment, fall in demand, collapse of supply chains, became apparent and the government sought to restart the economy again without any appropriate planning. As the virus is fast spreading into urban communities and shows no signs of abating, urban factories, shops and markets have been re opened vastly increasing the possibility of the infection spreading. Every day we are hearing about the virus making entry into densely populated slums and industrial areas. Yet the governments do not seem to have even a near semblance of adequate medical services to face the situation if massive escalation of infection. They also appear unconcerned about effectively enforcing containment of affected areas as it would affect the movement of labour to factories which are fully operational.

In most industrial areas when work restarted proper protocols were not followed and the workers were exposed to serious accidents. A massive gas leak occurred in LG Polymers in Vizag (plastics plant) causing the death of over 12 workers and sickness among thousands. As we write this report, a massive explosion has occurred in an agro chemical plant in Gujarat causing the death of at least five workers and injuring fifty others. Thousands of surrounding villagers have been evacuated as this explosion is expected to cause leakage of toxic gases.

In most of the industrial areas, resumption of work has been sluggish and not all workers have been taken back to work and many remain unemployed. A large number of workers face the prospects of being unemployed. The workers who have been taken back are now being employed at lower rates and much longer working hours often stretching to 24 hours. Even before the lock down was eased, leading capitalists urged the government to stay opera-

tion of labour laws governing working hours. Even before the government made a move in that direction, they had already increased working hours unilaterally from 12 to 16 hours a day. Turning back a number of workers and forcing the rest to work for longer hours for lesser pay without any overtime payments appears to be the new labour strategy of the capitalists to cope with the loss of production during the three month enforced closure.

But this was not all. In early May the central minister of Labour Affairs held a video conference with the ‘captains of industry’. Representatives of 12 employers’ associations and industry bodies on Friday asked the government to suspend labour laws for the next two to three years “to help industry come out of the present crisis”. Among the suggestions given by the employers’ associations were relaxation of the Industrial Disputes Act in order to treat the lock-down period as lay-off, treating wages paid during this period as corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding, increasing the maximum workforce to 50% from 33% upon reopening and suspending labour laws for two to three years. The employers’ representatives also said working hours should be increased to 12 hours a day and the industries be given an appropriate package to ensure no job losses. This meeting was soon followed by a slew of ‘relaxations’ in labour laws by the BJP ruled states.

In early May state after state (MP, UP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Haryana..) extended working hours from 8 to 12 hours, some requiring overtime payment and others not even insisting on it. And this was a part of a package - these states also through ordinances suspended the working of many labour laws for as long as three years



especially in new enterprises. This was spearheaded by the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh. The Chief Minister declared the suspension of major labour laws for new units which could be opened with minimal formalities and registration would be completed in one day and if delayed the concerned bureaucrat would be taken to task. The newly opened industrial units can organise third-party inspections. They will be exempted from the requirement of keeping registers and inspections. And industries can change shifts at their convenience. New industries will be exempted from all Sections of the Factories Act, 1948, except for Sections 6, 7, 8, 21-41 (H), 59, 67, 68, 79, 88 and 112. "...we have relaxed the Sections for three months and proposed to the Centre to extend the relaxation for 1,000 days," Mr. Chouhan said in a live video address from Bhopal.

The new units will be exempted from the entire Section in the Act on 'right of workers' that empowers workers to obtain details of their health and safety at work. Further, the employer is not bound to provide workers ventilation, lighting, toilets, sitting facilities, first aid boxes, protective equipment, canteens, crèches, weekly holidays and interval of rest. Not even providing drinking water is mandatory now.

Further, maintenance of a register of adult and child workers and allowing for advance payments will not apply to new units. They can even get away without maintaining cleanliness on premises and ensuring safe disposal of waste and effluents. The entire chapter on 'Penalties and Procedure', fixing responsibility on employers in case of the violation of the Act, will not apply to the new units. Instead of 61 registers, just one will be maintained.

Units will be exempted for 1,000 days from all provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, except Section 25, which prohibits financial aid for illegal strikes and lockouts. Organisations will be able to keep workers in service at their convenience. The Labour Department or the labour court will not interfere in the action taken by industries.

After amendments to the Madhya Pradesh Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1961, industries employing up to 100 workers will be exempted from it.

After an ordinance to amend the Madhya Pradesh Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1982, newly established factories will be exempted from making a contribution of ₹80 for each worker every year to the Labour Welfare Board for the next 1,000 days. They will also be

exempted from yearly returns, the Public Relations Department said on Tuesday.

Now, shops under the Shops and Establishments Act, 1958, will open from 6 a.m. to midnight.

The State government has proposed to the Centre to change the definition of factories. Only those using electricity in the manufacturing process and employing at least 20 workers should be registered, against the existing condition of those using electricity and employing at least 10. And without the use of electricity, the limit should be increased to 40 workers from 20.

After an amendment to the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, contractors employing less than 50 workers will be able to work without registration.

As the law does not empower state governments to make such sweeping changes in the labour laws, these are proposals to the central government to approve. The central government, needless to say is even keener to enact such changes to the labour laws in the name of simplifying them and making them investment friendly and easing the labour market.

Why were these governments so keen suddenly to initiate reforms in labour laws? Two major reasons emerge from the press reports. First of course was the pressure from the employers that we have mentioned earlier. The more important reason was to attract the investments fleeing from China post Covid 19. These governments hoped to attract the investors by promising them not infrastructure, or trained person power or tax reliefs, but unrestrained and unaccounted exploitation of workers. As is well known the investors across the world who had contributed to make China the manufactory of the world, now were reconsidering the wisdom of putting all their eggs in one basket even a stable one as China. They were now supposed to be keen on diversifying their portfolio of investment. It is another story that no one was really taking the prospect of investing in India, and instead were heading to Vietnam and other South East Asian countries and indeed, Chinese firms themselves were passing off their products as 'made in Vietnam' to circumvent the Trump sanctions against China.

When considering changes to labour laws it should be clear that they in actual fact apply only to a microscopic section of the working class in the country. Most of the labour laws do not apply to the vast unorganized sector and even the contract workers working in

the formal sector. Also we need to take into account that a substantial section of the working class, in actual fact the Industrial Reserve Army of Labour works the 'self employed sector' eking out a meagre living helping to produce or market the industrial produce. All these remain outside the operation of labour laws. It has been a long standing demand that labour laws be made simpler and more effective covering all sections of the laboring people. The demand then is not to abolish the labour laws, which are actually the result of more than a century and a half of labour struggles, but instead to extend their protection to all sections of the working class, especially to provide them formal recognition, minimum wages, fixed working hours, leave, and social security relating to retrenchment benefits, retirement benefits and sickness or injury related medical treatment etc. By suspending the labour laws altogether in the name of creating jobs is in reality a kick in the face of the struggling workers.

All these simply prove that the capitalists and the state are merely using the Covid crises as an excuse for making the working classes pay for the crises which is really a product of the policy of neo liberal globalization. This passing on the buck to those least equipped to bear the burden is characteristic of the class that holds power and capital. We can be assured that the last word on this cannot be that of the capitalists and their lackeys in power. The workers of the country will give them a fitting response sooner than later.

October 2020

The Coronavirus in Italy, from a Class Point of View

This article is made from some excerpts of the document "Covid-19: 'coronavirus' da un punto di vista di classe", of 48 pages, written by a group of communists including workers and health care professionals in the front line during the Covid-19 emergency.

The document investigates globally and on various levels the situation that occurred in Italy as a consequence of the pandemic, in terms of repercussions on the proletariat and the popular masses and above all, tries to understand and define areas and perspectives of action that communists will have to deal with in the next period.

"We are not cannon fodder!"

"We are not cannon fodder!" was the slogan of the workers in many plants in the whole country to challenge the government of Giuseppe Conte due to the lack of safety measures at work against the pandemic. The workers went on strike against the government's decision not to shut down productive activities that were not immediately essential: from Electrolux in Susegana to Pasotti in Brescia, from GKN in Campi Bisenzio to Piaggio in Pontedera, from Avio in Pomigliano d'Arco to Fincantieri in Palermo, from the logistics sector to the quarrymen, until the pressure and protests of Dalmine and Same in Bergamo that were shut down thanks to the force of protest of their workers in the most affected area.

Here are some facts. The first case of Covid-19 in Italy was recorded on January 31, when two Chinese tourists tested positive for SARS-Cov-2.

The government declared a state of emergency for six months, but only in words. No strong measures were taken. Health protocols to detect the disease were totally inadequate. The answer of the government consisted in the suspension of direct flights to and from China. This was a demagogic and ineffective measure, because

indirect flights still continued, but they were enough to trigger a wave of xenophobia. For three weeks, the Government and its high health officials declared that the virus was not circulating in Italy, that the situation was under control and there was minimum risk. The healthcare system and the population were not prepared for the epidemic. The only measures were for those coming from outside the country, such as thermal scanners in the airports and management of returns. Meanwhile, due to this criminal behaviour, on February 20, Covid-19 was accidentally detected on a man in the hospital in Codogno, thanks to the intuition of an anaesthesiologist who violated health protocols.

Other cases were found in Vò, in Veneto. Between February the 21 and the 23, the government ordered the lock-down for 10 (then 16) municipalities in Lombardy and Veneto in order to contain the epidemic. But at the moment of that partial lock-down, the virus had already spread widely, especially in the province of Bergamo. In the same period thousands of workers and exploited labourers were exposed to the infection, got the disease and infected their families and friends.

On March 1, Conte signed a decree which contained measures to apply in the so-called red zones, the most affected regions and provinces.

Work from home was introduced nationwide, in the public administration but not only there. For those who worked in manufacturing, shipbuilding, quarries or logistics, the Government and the regions did not provide anything, just playing the blame game. While the media minimized the epidemic, bourgeois politicians kept on putting the spotlight on the needs of the capitalist economy, which could not – and must not – close.

The pressure of the Confindustria (the main owners' association in Italy) and owners immediately imposed profit, rather than health, as a priority. In the emergency they tried to keep the same levels of production, as if the plants were places isolated from the epidemic and the measures to control the infection coming from the scientific community were not valid for the workers, whereas they were absolutely mandatory for the rest of country.

While the political atmosphere was more and more characterised by the call for "national unity", on March 4 the Government announced the closing of the schools. Not the

factories: workers must keep on producing surplus value, risking their health and life.

On March 8, confronted with the spread of the epidemic, the Government published a DPCM (Prime Minister's Decree: an administrative measure having the force of law without an act of parliament, according article 77 of the Italian Constitution) requiring quarantine for 16 million people in Lombardy and 14 other provinces. The next day quarantine was extended to the whole country. Nothing was said about stopping non-essential productions or about public transport, which become strongly infection areas. Regional presidents started to argue about everything, but not about this.

On March 11, the Government ordered commercial activities to be closed, except for grocery stores and drug stores. Once more nothing about manufacturing activities.

On the same day strikes began to spread rapidly, from northern to southern Italy. Only after dozens of spontaneous and organized work stoppages, the Government ran for cover by meeting with owners' associations and trade-union leaders.

It was neither thanks to more or less direct appeals nor thanks to the "good will" of industry that the Government made an urgent conference call with Confindustria and the trade-unions to discuss "safety measures" in the workplace; neither was it thanks to the action of the trade-union bureaucracy, which was confined to sending tips to the owners and the Government to sanitise the workplace and to give masks of questionable effectiveness for the safety of the workers.

Spontaneous and self-organised strikes forced the Prime Minister to call that meeting. The workers' protests represented a positive answer to the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. This way the atmosphere of demobilisation imposed by the leaderships of the collaborationist trade-unions and the silence about working and living conditions were broken at that particularly difficult moment.

On March 14, an agreement about safety at work was signed, but it gave no guarantee for the health and safety of the workers, nor any real prevention of infection. Neither did it assure the supply of any personal protective equipment. Anyway even these minimal results were the result of the workers' struggle.

For the sake of argument, let us say that the protocol was verifiable and applied in all the big unionised factories, but what about small, not or scarcely unionised companies, which are the great majority in Italy? And what about the outsourced ones?

The obstinacy not want to close them can be considered criminal.

The real aim is to give a reason to keep on producing in thousands of factories and companies, construction sites and warehouses and even in workplaces where safety at work cannot be assured.

Regarding the workers, their temperature is measured, they are given some masks; dispensers of sanitising gel are installed in the workplace and, if there is time and very quickly, sanitisation of the work stations is done. Obviously, as it is profitable for the owner, workers with health problems can stay at home if they provide a medical certificate.

These exploiters have forgotten the existence of asymptomatic people, that swabs are not provided for in the agreement, the possible contagion of the workers during their commute since they travel hundreds of kilometres and use insufficient and packed buses; they also forgot that the supply of surgical masks is insufficient for the working hours because they have to be replaced at least twice a day and are also needed for the travel to work and back, that glasses and gloves are given once a week if you are lucky, rather than every day.

By now, it has been shown that, in the areas where the owners forced the factories to remain open, there were a lot of deaths. When workers are moving, others move around them, so the infection gets larger and so do the deaths.

This should make one think, that those who controls the system, instead of enacting measures to protect the community, act above all to satisfy the interests of capital.

So many workers were forced to get to their non-essential manufacturing activities that were still open, in addition to the workers in essential activities.

The trade-union bureaucrats not only did not protect the interests of the workers and did not ask for an extension of the closing of non-essential factories, but they allowed, with just a certification, the owners to keep many non-essential factories open;

they met with the owners and decided with government approval that workers had to return to the factories.

Dealing with an exponential rise in the number of deaths, the Secretariats of Fim, Fiom and Uilm (metalworkers' unions), instead of demanding that the workers stay home, rushed to declare that the workers could leave their homes and coexist with the virus, in order not to stop productions. On their part, the rank-and-file militant unions, while supporting and organising part of the protests and strikes, acted alone without developing the necessary unity of action.

Only in the face of the continuation of the strikes, on March 22 the government decided to stop non-essential productions starting on March 24, that is the ones not in the ATECO (acronym for economic activities) list, to which war production were added. So, due to pressure from the owners, the government took only partial and very late measures. Despite the spread of the epidemic, thousands of non-essential companies got permission to keep the production of surplus value up through a simple request to the Prefecture. The question of what is essential production was never answered. The owners asked the government to continue production and the government representatives gave their consent, whereas the bureaucrats just washed their hands of this.

The Consequences of a Criminal Policy

The government delay in adopting decisive measures, thus keeping millions of workers at their workplaces, on trains and buses and in the streets for weeks, made the spread of the virus easier.

To this it must be added that the capacity for contagion of Covid-19, as well as the possibility of recovery, is not separate from class conditions. Not all the people affected by the virus have the same opportunity to fight the disease. Industrialists, bankers, managers, large shareholders, state leaders and politicians have far better conditions to fight the pandemic than millions of proletarians.

It is much easier to face a life with restrictions in mobility and social contacts for those people who have great stocks of food and money, as compared to the poor people who live in small overcrowded apartments, who are unemployed and live day by day; not to mention the homeless, for whom there are no conditions for any norms of hygiene, and, even more, are fined because they are found in the streets.

Since the flattening of the epidemiologic curve, the capitalists asked and obtained from the government permission to restart all manufacturing production even if still dangerous: the deaths are just numbers to them. The big companies constantly increased the pressure and found attentive listeners in the regional presidents, in the prefects and in the government itself in order to pass rapidly to Phase 2.

As a result, many factories restarted without health measures, whereas demonstrations such as for Women's Day on March 8, Freedom Day on April 25 and International Workers' Day on May 1 were prohibited!

The so-called “social distancing” of one meter is only enforced when assemblies or demonstrations take place! The government forces labourers to work while the Commissione di Garanzia (an independent authority monitoring strikes' correctness) bans strikes.

The behaviour of the capitalists and the choices of their representatives – who underrated predictable risks, circumvented obligations, avoided reacting when the threat was still preventable and avoidable, delayed and reduced the suspension of production – strongly contributed to the exposure of millions of workers and their families to a lethal virus. They are responsible for the deaths of thousands of people from the exploited and oppressed class.

The policies followed by the ruling class did not focus on the life and health of the working-class and the popular masses but on the protection of profits, on the stability of the capitalist system and its State.

It is not just a matter of inability or terrible mistakes; it is about



the policies calculated on the basis of the cost that the bourgeoisie has decided to make the proletariat pay, in order to keep production up and withstand international competition.

These awful responsibilities add up to those of a ruling class that, in the last decades, destroyed the public health-care system in favour of private one, cut thousands of beds and reduced the staff, with the well-known consequences that everyone suffered and saw.

The only measure that would not have exposed workers to the risk of infection would have been the immediate closing of factories, keeping them closed for the whole time needed to lower the infections and minimise the deaths; it must be remembered that both numbers are underestimated, but the *Holy Alliance* of owners, class-collaborationist trade-unions and the government forced workers to labour but *Their Majesties* could not avoid sit-in and strikes to obtain the right health and safety conditions.

Essential to work are: masks and PPE, redesigning of the work stations to assure the distancing, reduction of the pace of work and the increase in breaks, a well organised schedule (entrance, exit, canteen) to avoid gathering in closed areas and appropriate commuter transport. We cannot allow the owners to economize on the skin of the workers.

All this happened despite the danger of a relapse, with a massive infection among the workers that could have struck a death blow to an already exhausted health care system after months of emergency and decades of cuts in both resources and staff.

This is the latest proof of the criminality of the capitalist system that, in order to survive, has to push the whole society more and more into chaos and savagery.

The surplus value extracted from the workers must never stop; the working-class and the popular masses must pay the whole cost of the epidemic, whereas the minority, the owners of the majority of the wealth, do not pay anything, but indeed obtain billions from the State, speculate and get ever richer also with Covid-19.

Also, in terms of health, this crisis will be paid above all by the working-class, by the weakest and the last of society. Another proof of the different conditions in dealing with the crisis in our society can be seen in the jails, where just protests ended in 14 violent deaths.

Special attention must be also paid to the forced lock-down, an extreme and unusual measure... It has some critical issues,

obviously depending on the length of the emergency, that must be kept in mind.

Isolation has consequences that contradict its own health reasons. If it is true that the lock-down reduces the spread of the disease, it is also true that other pathologies arise or worsen and increase the chances of family infections; the consequences on individual and collective health must be carefully weighed.

Women are the ones who suffer most from this situation of domestic slavery: they are not only forced to produce from home while performing their traditional role in taking care of the family, but they also have to face increasing domestic violence.

The RSA massacre

Finally, we have to mention the massacre of the elderly in retirement and nursing homes, both private and public for the poorest people. Nursing homes (RSA, in Italy) are structures created in the 1980s in the USA and then spread to all the imperialist countries; they are places where old workers who are no longer productive are sent, as well as old people considered a burden on society: these people can still create a profit by their segregation through expensive fees paid by the families or by the public administration.

According to the data given by the ISS (Italian National Institute of Health), in April, 42% of the "guests" in these homes died because of Covid-19 nationwide (57.7 % in Emilia Romagna and 53.4% in Lombardy, the richest regions of Italy).

The reason for the massacre is the criminal policies adopted by the regions and nationwide that led to the transfer of elderly patients affected by Covid-19 from hospital units to RSA, often not up to standards, where preventive measures against infections are not always respected, staff is cut to the bone and always threatened with firing for the sake of the good image of the company where "everything is fine".

Pandemic, developments of the economic crisis and the class struggle

In an already saturated market and in a crisis of overproduction, the pandemic led to the contraction of production and consumption worldwide. The decline in demand will lead to a rapid decrease in production and employment. Basically, there will be a flood of

bankrupt industrial and commercial companies, of dismissals of workers and elimination of small producers, that it is a phase of economic recession and a reduction of the economic and social development.

The forecast of a 40% decline of the GDP in the US in the first quarter of 2020 confirmed this negative trend that finds a predecessor only in the Great Depression of the 1920s.

The imperialist bourgeoisie, involved in international competition, will become more and more aggressive aiming to increasing the exploitation of the working class along with a reduction in salary in order to lower the cost of production, shares of the market and gain just a low profit. Locally, where possible, it will try to restore a suffocating Neo-Keynesian model to share losses and at the same time it will redefine models of national productive and the dislocation of some production.

To accelerate industrial restructuring, taking advantage of the pandemic, the bourgeois government, in Italy as elsewhere, suspended fundamental rights of the workers and the masses, but the freedom of production and exploitation accorded to the enterprises is becoming less and less acceptable in the face of the denial of freedom and rights of the workers who produce the country's wealth.

On the other hand, the carnage of the elderly in the RSA that took place in capitalist and imperialist countries, the thousands of deaths caused by the lack of intensive care beds due to the dismantlement of the public health-care system in favour of the private ones, the many health-care professionals and workers dead because of the lack PPE, the criminal and catastrophic management of the epidemic by the government and its total subordination to the needs of the owners' associations, not to stop production to keep on assuring profit, can change the point of view of the workers and the most advanced among the popular masses.

It is no coincidence that workers, who courageously and responsibly publicly denounced the lack of PPE, have been sanctioned or fired.

In many cases the firing happened due to the fact that the relationship of trust between the company and worker failed.

This reason, which in the past was "reserved" to managers, for whom the relationship with the company can actually be trustful because of their powers, for some time has been increasingly used

also for the employees who have just a management role. The owners' message is very clear: no worker can be allowed to inform or publicly criticise the company to which they sell their labour power, not even when it is the only way to protect their rights, but even when their life and health are threatened. The company is always right (!), the end. Even when it is responsible for the worst abominations. Inside the company, the worker must only produce, obey and shut up; outside the company they must keep silent and whoever doesn't must be punished.

To fight for safety and health means to fight for a culture of health focused on no-risk policies, that is the true way to prevent risks and of the environmental damage.

At best, the bourgeoisie simply contains socially relevant pathologies just by removal of the sources of contamination, as with tuberculosis in the first decades of the last century.

Prevention, which the bourgeoisie is selling as a form of health safety, is a "false safety", as clearly emerged in the conditions of the public health care system. The capitalist model of production is not compatible with an effective prevention, which starts from a complete health monitoring at the workplace and the protection of a healthy environment.

Under capitalism, disease is useful for the large industrial and financial monopolies owned by pharmaceutical companies, whose interest is in producing vaccines that are often useless or chemotherapeutic drugs to cure cancer or other big problems obscured by the pandemic, which continue to take their toll. The pharmaceutical and health technology industry is the main sector in producing profits worldwide.

In the current pandemic, the multinational pharmaceutical corporations saw a business opportunity, moreover, one financed by public subsidies; this is, the usual competition between giants not interested in public health but exclusively oriented to maximise private profit.

"Nothing will be the same" is their motto, but it should be corrected to *"Nothing could or should be the same"*. To correct their inequities or to improve health-care systems – which limits are inevitable in a capitalist regime – is not enough. True recovery and the protection of labour, the environment and health must solve the problem at its very root: it is necessary to overthrow the system that

can only, like a mathematical equation, lead humanity and nature to destruction.

Thus it should be clear that the capitalist system, during its development, lost its vitality and driving force, becoming more and more sluggish, unable to satisfy the subsistence needs of the masses at the base of the social pyramid, because the financial oligarchy dominates and concentrates all economic and political power in its own hands.

The prospect offered by capitalism is a permanent war of survival by daily work to pay for essentials, to heal, to study and to pay taxes that the state will give to the capitalists as subsidies for companies bankrupted in the crisis.

In this context it is necessary to provide the workers and the population with greater consciousness about the inability of the system to guarantee health and life, a job, a salary and a proper income to everybody, in addition to the obsessive aim of the state to restrict individual and collective freedom.

The proletarians, workers and the most advanced of the popular masses are beginning to uncover the rhetorical and false speeches about inter-class unity in dealing with the epidemic; they are beginning to concretely understand that their own interests are different from those of the enterprises; they see that the government is not for everyone but is in the service of specific interests; they sense that this system, based on the private interests of the few, is no longer able to provide satisfactory answers for their needs, not even the vital ones.

The proletarians, workers and the most advanced of the popular masses, even if they often lack theory and sometimes have a limited consciousness, are effectively experiencing what Marx and Engels described in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

"The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie"
and then

"Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells".

The elevation of consciousness should be the specific task of the communist party, able to ensure a connection between the

everyday battles based on real needs to the revolutionary struggle against capitalism for socialism. Basically, to recreate the long-broken connection with the workers and proletarian vanguard.

If this is what the proletariat gets and comes from the struggle, then the possibility and the ability to fight become essential.

The characteristics of this period encourage a tactic of the united proletarian front, of the unity of the workers who want to fight against capitalism and its offensive, based on the protection of the economic and political interests of the working-class; the characteristic of this period show that it is impossible for any real class need to be solved without bringing into play the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

Solidarity, unity, fight and organisation are the necessary instruments to move forward as one with a common strategy in defence and protection of our rights, our health and safety, our dignity and our future.

Conclusion and prospective

The Coronavirus Covid-19 epidemic, exacerbating the preceding persistent economic crisis with its dramatic consequences on the workers and the popular masses, has clearly shown everyone a number of contradictions of the capitalist system that, up to now, the bourgeoisie somehow managed to cover up.

Thus the inability of capitalism to solve the problems of society and its predisposition to worsen them have emerged; to protect its profits, the capitalists and the governments in their service play with the health and life of the working class; they limit their rights and freedom in order to prevent a rebellion; they also privatise necessary services like health-care, increasing military expenses in order to find new sources of profit. In a capitalist society, there is no more room to satisfy the real needs of the people, its only aim is the maximum profit for the few.

The limits of the models of development based on the international division of labour – with industrial production in countries with low labour cost, whereas the imperialist countries are dominated by finance and services – have become more and more evident, particularly the Italian model, with its declining industrial production, mostly dependent upon German production, indeed promoting the development of finance, tourism, fashion, design,

entertainment and services: these are all sectors that put a lot of money in the hands of few people, but none of them creates wealth.

Adding these factors to the rampant poverty that is expected to grow and it is possible to foresee a potential explosive situation hidden under the embers, as reported by the Italian intelligence agencies regarding the threat of widespread social and popular protests.

If a new significant wave of conflict and struggle should take place, the most advanced people could no more limit themselves to defence and to demands on the economic level, but should inevitably develop on the social and potentially political level.

The current crisis presents enormous tasks. First but not only, it is about collectively and in solidarity protecting and preserving the health and life of the proletariat and the exploited workers; it is also about developing the basis for the emancipation from wage-labor through the construction of the communist party and its rooting in the working class, because today socialism is not an ambition, but an real urgent need of the class.

July 2020

Two Years of the Oligarchic Regime of the 4T in Mexico

The regime of the Fourth Transformation (4T) that currently governs Mexico, headed by Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), was elected in July of 2018, with a little more than 30 million votes. Although he formally took office in December of 2018, he actually began to exercise government duties since August of 2018, agreeing on impunity, and in large part on economic and class continuity with the outgoing government headed by Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN). This was possible due to the political exhaustion and weakness of the outgoing regime and the "apparent" strength of the elected government, which had broad mass support and, in addition to winning executive power, won the majority in parliament (Federal Chamber of Deputies and Chamber of Senators), along with its allies.

It is precisely in the recently elected and inaugurated Federal Chamber of Deputies (in September of 2018), that the elected government, which had not yet taken office, did so in December of 2018. It carried out its first important act of government by agreeing, with the outgoing government, on the budget of income and expenditure, the so-called public spending for 2019. This budget had a substantially oligarchic and anti-popular content, similar to the public spending approved later for 2020, which gave continuity to the economic policy of the previous neoliberal oligarchic governments, providing greater public resources for megaprojects and the businesses of the oligarchs and a reduction in social spending. That is, a reduction in public education and health care, social housing, public science and technology, resources for the countryside aimed at poor and middle peasants, resources for indigenous people; that is, a reduction in public resources for the pressing needs of the popular majorities.

To them it became clear that for the new regime of the Fourth Transformation, social spending of small quantities of money through government social programs meant distributing the resource "from below", to continue managing poverty with intentions of cronyism. Using a populist and demagogic discourse, they stated that

in trying to combat corruption, they were "directly" handing over support or a quantity of money to beneficiaries of a scholarship. meanwhile, they decreed a "republican austerity" that took away resources from the public health system, its infrastructure and staff, eliminating or restricting labor rights, reducing the budget for supplies, and doing the same for the educational system as a whole. They reduced resources for social housing, eliminating or changing previous programs aimed at the poorest, cutting or reducing support for older adults by raising the age to access them from 65 to 68 years, reducing support for indigenous communities, eliminating programs and support to poor and middle peasants, while granting subsidies and support to agro-industrial monopolies, among others.

This same "republican austerity" considerably increased the budget for large mega-projects and oligarchic businesses such as the "Maya Train", the new "Felipe Angeles" civil airport in Santa Lucia, the "Dos Bocas" oil refinery built by private companies, and the most dangerous, the great increase in public spending on the repressive forces of the State, particularly the armed forces (Army, Navy and National Guard), handed over to the corrupt mafia military leadership inherited from previous regimes, which since then has conducted profitable business.

This budget increase has also served to consolidate the militarization of the country, keeping the military in the streets. This is a process that, although it continued from previous regimes, has been consolidated under the current one, with the creation of a military force that will be in the streets until the end of López Obrador's term. The so-called National Guard, made up mainly of the military, in a military manner, will carry out the tasks of public security and repression against social discontent. This had its "glorious debut" by repressing Central American migrants who tried to reach the United States by passing through Mexico, playing the nefarious and reactionary role of the living and moving "anti-immigrant wall", that Trump promised would be on the Mexican border, but in fact the regime headed by AMLO has operated along its southern border and even along the northern border of Mexico with the United States.

Since the second half of 2018 and throughout 2019, a fight against the social movement has developed, sometimes veiled, sometimes open, while publicly it showed the oligarchic sector (part of the "Mafia of power", as he called it, of previous governments)

that the new regime would carry out its “Fourth Transformation” together with it. So, Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador criminalized social organizations, unions and popular movements, many of which were essential to his victory, calling them “conservative radicals”, defaming them by stating that they were the same as the corrupt grassroots organizations of the parties of the right and of previous governments, rejecting them as spokespersons for the masses. His oligarchic regime stated that the only truly representative and valid organs for serving the popular majorities were those of the 4T regime, that the organizations of the popular masses no longer had a reason to exist, and that therefore, his regime would no longer work with them; demagogically declaring that now he would “deal with” the masses directly and personally and “listen” to their proposals.

On the other hand, he permanently worked with well-known oligarchs and directly integrated them into his regime, through an “advisory council”, the “Business Advisory Council”, to make strategic decisions about the course of the country's economy. This group of financial oligarchs is made up of: Ricardo Salinas Pliego, president of Grupo Salinas (Banco Azteca, TV Azteca and Elektra); Bernardo Gomez, Executive Co-President of Grupo Televisa; Olegario Vázquez Aldir of Grupo Empresarial Ángeles (Imagen TV, Excelsior, Hospitales Ángeles, etc.), Camino Real hotels, and Grupo Aeroportuario del Pacífico; Carlos Hank Gonzalez, Chair of Grupo Financiero Banorte, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of Gruma and Grupo Hermes; Daniel Chavez from Grupo Hotelero Vidanta; and Miguel Alemán Magnani, Executive President of Interjet. The coordination of this council is the responsibility of business owner Alfonso Romo, Secretary of the Presidency of the Republic. In addition to this council, the total dominance of the financial oligarchy over the 4T regime is provided through AMLO's treatment and direct agreements with individual oligarchs, such as Carlos Slim of Grupo Carso, América Móvil, Banco INBURSA, among other companies which he owns. It is worth mentioning that although the previous neoliberal governments had their own hard core of oligarchs, the Mexican Business Council (CMN), unlike the 4T regime, did not dare to claim that they were part of their regime and were presented as an “independent” agency of the private initiative. Throughout 2019, the oligarchic sector grouped in the CMN, which had been favored in previous regimes and was set aside, be-

came the right-wing opposition to the 4T regime, with an openly right-wing position of a fascist coup.

For their part, during 2018 and 2019 the proletariat, the popular majorities, the peoples of Mexico and their movement, suffered from confusion and demobilization in their ranks. This was partly due to the hope that there really could be a change, but above all as a product of the demagogic propaganda and populist maneuvers of AMLO and his new regime, which still continued to promise the fulfillment of an anti-neoliberal project and democratic transformations in favor of the majorities. It should be remembered that the victory of July of 2018 was the product of the great discontent among the Mexican masses, not only against the neoliberal politicians of the right and center, but also against the neoliberal economic policy and the big bourgeoisie. This is why the discourse of López Obrador stated that anyone who criticized, opposed and even more mobilized against his regime was conservative, that they were playing the game of the right and defending the previous order. This was implanted in broad sectors of the masses, demobilizing them for much of 2019. However, despite this difficult situation in the class struggle for the proletariat and the popular majorities, we, the revolutionary and communist sectors, remained firm in our class tactics and strategy against the new oligarchic regime of the 4T. We patiently continued to unmask its oligarchic class character, denouncing its anti-popular policy, which continued that of previous regimes, its populist and demagogic mask, its selective and sometimes frank and open repression. We insisted on the tactic of raising the forms of organization and struggle, calling on the people to overcome their confusion and demobilization. We took to the streets for concrete and heartfelt demands of the masses rejected by the new regime or against its concrete reactionary policies. At the same time, pressured by the economic downturn that was already announcing the new economic crisis, sectors of the proletariat and popular masses took to the streets to fight.

In the first months of 2019, the outbreak of the labor Movement 20/32 in Matamoros, in the state of Tamaulipas bordering the US, of workers from maquiladoras and manufacturing factories, called to stands out. This is an allusion to its main demands for a 20% wage increase, and a one-time bonus of 32 thousand pesos, with work stoppages breaking out in almost a hundred companies and achieving two great economic successes. The first was the granting by

most of the companies of the 20% salary increase and the bonus of 32 thousand pesos, and the second was the formation and legalization of its Independent National Union of Industries and Services 20/32. At the political level, the main victory was to overcome the demobilization imposed by the 4T regime and its propaganda, in addition to unmasking its true class character before the working class by openly siding with the bosses throughout the movement, helping them against the workers on strike through the Secretary of Labor and other institutions.

While the working class fought and won against the bosses and the oligarchic regime of the 4T during the first months of 2019, they began their offensive, trying to impose the megaprojects and big oligarchic businesses that their predecessors had left pending. In February of 2019, they announced the reactivation of the Morelos Integral Project (PIM), which is the construction by private companies of two thermoelectric plants, a gas and water pipeline. Once built, the private business is done, they will be handed over to the Federal Electricity Commission, a public electricity company, that in previous governments had been unmasked and stopped thanks to popular mobilization and which AMLO had repudiated and fought against during his campaign. Now in office, he called for reactivating it, even knowing its serious environmental, economic and social impact on the communities of three states (Puebla, Tlaxcala and Morelos) through which they will pass and in which the works will be set up. It is through this megaproject that the recurrent political practice of the 4T and its first important defeat has been made



known. He carried out the demagogic populist practice of trying to legitimize acts contrary to the popular interests and for the benefit of the financial oligarchy through campaigns, propaganda events, and pseudo-"referendums", and sometimes, through supposed dialogue with the aim of distraction. He did this to later claim that these dialogues and consultations were in favor of the projects or proposals and that they were legitimized and legalized.

Thus, confident of his popularity, AMLO and his regime organized his first "referendum" to find out whether or not the people agreed to the reactivation of the PIM, to the surprise and anger of the masses in those states and places where many of them had openly supported his coming to office. Even so, before the "referendum", several of his opponents attended the forums and events prior to the referendum in which the regime tried to convince people of the "benefits" of the project and called on them to support its implementation. This was despite the fact that weeks before, AMLO himself rejected them, saying: "Listen, left radicals, for me you are nothing more than conservatives." One of his opponents, Samir Flores, who attended one of those events, made an open criticism, unmasking the anti-popular nature of the project; days later he was assassinated. This was the first state crime of the current regime, imposing this so-called "referendum" days later. Despite the fact that the NO vote won in the regions where the thermoelectric plant would be located and from where the water would be drawn, the 4T regime said that in "other" places the YES vote had won and so it would be carried out. However, the mobilization against the PIM in the streets, with blockades, sit-ins and against the "consultation", ended up being a victory for the popular movement and a defeat for the AMLO regime. It unmasked its demagoguery and oligarchic class character, exposing his pettiness and true anti-popular face before the masses. This managed to stop the megaproject for more than a year, which began again in September of 2020.

In mid-2019, the peasant movement and the teachers' movement also took to the streets due to the impact of the anti-popular policy of the 4T regime. The peasant organizations carried out a national strike and sit-ins for several weeks in the capital, and in various parts of the country. Although they were unable to change AMLO's anti-peasant policy, they did manage to unmask his agro-industrial and land dispossession policy which provided continuity to mining projects and megaprojects of various kinds, the essence of

which is the dispossession and looting of territories by the financial oligarchy.

For its part, the national democratic teachers' movement headed by the National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE) also took to the streets with the demand to overturn the neoliberal educational reform, one of many neoliberal structural reforms imposed by previous governments. These were reforms that AMLO had promised to repeal, a promise that in mid-2019 he had no intention of fulfilling. Under the pressure from the teachers he had to give in, partially repealing the educational reform, eliminating the most burdensome labor impacts on education workers, but leaving the rest of the content. He also applied his populist tactic of distracting, delaying and demobilizing dialogue towards the teaching profession. This let him keep it partially demobilized with the supposed attention to its demands by personally receiving the President of the Republic at its Single National Negotiation Commission (of the CNTE), from time to time listening and promising but not carrying out or resolving any of their substantial demands. now we have as a result the misnamed Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN)-AMLO Educational Reform.

Another aspect of his oligarchic, pro-employer and anti-worker policy is his implementation of measures against the workers and their union organizations, of neoliberal labor reform, even deepening it by eliminating the tripartite justice in labor matters, suppressing its institutions (Conciliation and Arbitration Boards, with the participation of the employer, government and worker) and the participation of the workers in the agencies of conciliation and resolution of labor disputes, imposing labor tribunals with one-person bourgeois judges. He justified this reactionary right-wing "change" by the corruption existing in the tripartite organs, as if the courts, their judges and the bourgeois justice system and the judicial power in general, were not a nauseating garbage dump of bourgeois corruption and injustice against the popular majorities.

In addition to the above, the pact and complicity of AMLO and his 4T with the leaders of the charrismo, the yellow unions, with the most reactionary and anti-worker of the pro-employer unions in strategic industries, such as the public company *Petróleos Mexicanos* (PEMEX). He agreed to its corrupt and reactionary leadership maintaining control of the union, while wearing down and attacking its dissents. He maintained and developed a policy of intimidation and repression against workers in the 4T government

itself, such as that suffered by the striking workers of the state news agency, Notimex.

In addition, he openly supported the criminal exploitation of the workers during the pandemic and the quarantine, by protecting the bosses and factories from closing, even when the workers got sick and died as was the case in the maquiladora industries in the north of the country; it was unmasked as an anti-worker regime and an enemy of the workers. As the height of cynicism and more, to pretend to cleanse himself by means of empty definitions and only on paper, he decreed an increase in the minimum wage to more than 180 pesos per day. However, in the public and private sector this is not a concrete reality; rather job insecurity and the worsening of working and salary conditions is developing. In addition, the bourgeoisie is being subsidized with a program pompously called "Young People Building the Future", handing over tens of thousands of young people to exploitation for a miserable scholarship of less than 4,000 pesos a month. This is paid by the government but without any labor rights, as "apprentices", with a compulsory work day, and condemned to be fired at the whim of the employer, who can replace them with other "apprentices" without any cost to the bourgeois, since the scholarship is paid for by the 4T regime.

The increase in repression and violence with impunity against the popular masses is another characteristic of the regime headed by Lopez Obrador. The number of disappearances has grown, the assassinations increased during 2018 and 2019 compared to previous years, particularly the assassinations of journalists, defenders of the environment and human rights, and the assassinations of social leaders. The most recent of these, at the end of August of 2020, was of our Comrade Tomas Martínez Pinacho of the Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist) and the Revolutionary Popular Front. This was a State crime in which the 4T, the mining companies, the Government of Oaxaca and the Municipal Government of Miahuatlán in the same state were involved.

Adding to this is the increase in violence against women, the increase in femicides with impunity, exposing the bourgeois justice administration and the bourgeois judicial power, as sewers in permanent decomposition without any possibility of being rectified. Rather the tendency to continue to rot is rising. In particular, violence against women strengthened the women's movement and the movement of families of victims without justice. During the second

half of 2019 and the first months of 2020, it reached its peak on March 8, 2020, with a large mobilization of tens of thousands of women who made the “Fourth Transformation” regime tremble. It only subsided, in the face of the imposition of the quarantine due to the Covid-19 pandemic; this was also true of the rest of the left-wing opposition movements to the regime, which were increasing but were halted.

During the entire period of quarantine and "social distancing" imposed by imperialism and the 4T, from April to September 2020, the costs of the crisis and the pandemic have fallen on the backs of the proletariat and the popular majorities. Most of the nearly 80,000 deaths from Covid-19 come from the ranks of the exploited and oppressed, as well as the millions of unemployed; according to official data, more than 2 million from the formal sector have lost their jobs, not counting the millions of unemployed from of the so-called “informal economy”. There is an increase in poverty and misery, while the regime and its oligarchs continue with their lucrative businesses and profits, gobbling up public spending through their megaprojects and other capitalist forms of getting out of the crisis in a manner favorable to them. However, despite the pandemic and the measures imposed by the 4T, at the end of August, and especially since September 1, 2020, a new wave of mobilizations against the oligarchic regime has been unleashed, demanding that the rich pay for the crisis, and life, health, bread, peace, work and justice for the people. Meanwhile the regime remains deaf, caught up in its own petty course, making propaganda about the midterm elections of 2021. It "spreads" the corruption of notorious cadres of past regimes such as Lozoya and his accomplices, fooling people with "referendums" and threats of trial of former presidents, but without any intention of judging them much less punishing them. Meanwhile the corruption within his own government is being uncovered, with the president's brother receiving bribes, his daughter-in-law dispossessing national lands, the Ministry of Finance looting the public trusts, among other cases.

We can conclude that under two years of the "Fourth Transformation" regime headed by AMLO, there have been good results and good business with great profits for the group of oligarchs that it serves, and greater exploitation, poverty, misery, violence, impunity and despair for the proletariat and the popular majorities. However, they are once again taking to the streets to fight against the new oli-

garchic regime, as well as fighting the pro-coup right wing, carrying out our revolutionary tactics, raising our forms of struggle towards the General Political Strike and organization towards the National Assembly of the Proletariat and the Peoples of Mexico and our slogans: towards the overthrow of the oligarchic regime and for a regime of the proletariat and the popular majorities, through the proletarian revolution.

October 2020

The Road to the Revisionist Abyss: Notes on the Historical Experience of the Soviet Union

The victory of the October 1917 revolution in Russia, led and organized by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, marked a milestone in the history of humanity. For the first time, the dominated classes (workers and peasants) took power in a country, maintained it, and began building an alternative order to capitalism. Socialism ceased to be a project in books written by Marx and Engels; it became a reality. For this reason, the Bolshevik revolution spread abroad and sparked the enthusiasm of all the workers of the world, while it frightened the bourgeoisie that saw its power and privileges threatened.

But that revolution soon found itself faced with immense difficulties. Building socialism was not going to be an easy task. Russia was a huge country, with enormous human and material resources, but very backward. Furthermore, the proletarian revolution did not triumph in other more technically and economically advanced European countries, and socialism had to be built in one country.

One of the problems that the Bolsheviks had to face from the beginning was the development of the bureaucracy. The Soviet State was forced to use officials of the tsarist regime for its administration and, as that the State came to control the economy, a communist bureaucracy also emerged. Lenin was always seriously concerned about this issue and tried by all means for this bureaucratic layer to be at the service of the workers and not place itself above them. In fact, the Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants Inspection, headed by Stalin until 1922, had the objective of ensuring the proper functioning of the administration and avoiding bureaucratic deviations.

In his last writings, Lenin recommended that 50% of the members of the Central Committee be workers who had not had a long period of management in the Soviet apparatus. It was his response to a disturbing question that he raised in an article on "The National Question" dictated to his secretaries on December 31, 1922, where he stated:

“It is said that a united apparatus was needed. Where did that assurance come from? Did it not come from that same Russian apparatus which, as I pointed out in one of the preceding sections of my diary, we took over from tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil?... the apparatus we call ours is, in fact, still quite alien to us; it is a bourgeois and tsarist hotch-potch and there has been no possibility of getting rid of it in the course of the past five years without the help of other countries and because we have been ‘busy’ most of the time with military engagements and the fight against famine.”

In the light of these words, it is evident that the bureaucratic question was a recurring theme from the beginning of the revolution. The introduction of the planned economy from 1928, with the state management of the whole economy, increased the size of the bureaucracy and demanded greater revolutionary vigilance. Although we cannot state this with absolute certainty, we think that part of the political violence that the Soviet state used between 1936 and 1939 was due to this attempt to control a state apparatus in which conspiracies were organized to put an end to the building of socialism and to remove Stalin from the leadership of the Party. All these attempts failed and socialism became a reality, transforming the USSR into a great economic, economic and scientific power. Stalin's correct policy was proven during World War II, when the Soviet Union played the main role in defeating Nazism.

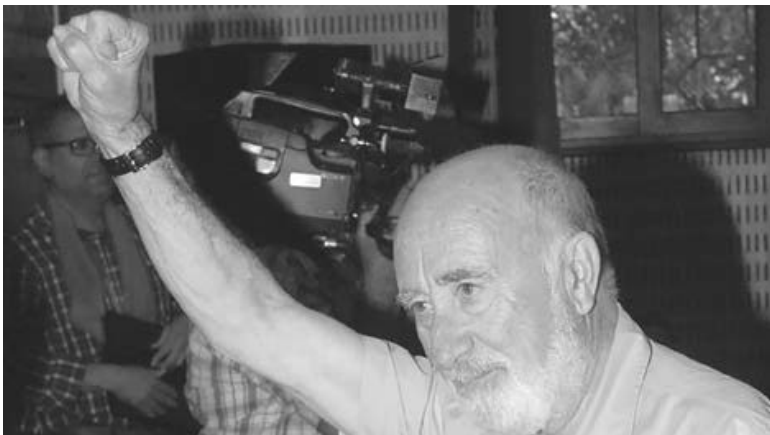
However, the bureaucratic deformations did not disappear from the Soviet State and, after Stalin's death in 1953, they came to light. The political and ideological struggle that began from that date led to the triumph of a revisionist bureaucracy that abandoned the principles of Marxism-Leninism, although in the face of the Soviet people it proclaimed its fidelity to the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The first act in the enthronement of revisionism was the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), held in 1956. During a closed session, between February 24 and 25, Nikita Khrushchev, General Secretary of the Party, read the so-called **Secret Speech**, in which he made a brutal criticism of management of Stalin without evidence or documentation, whom he accused of innumerable crimes, of violating Soviet legality, of promoting the cult of personality... in short, a catalog of accusations that made the Bolshevik leader little less than a monstrous tyrant. This **Speech** not

only demoralized millions of communists around the world, but provided ammunition to the bourgeoisie for their anti-communist campaigns. Khrushchev carried out a criminal act and began a path that would end up destroying the USSR in 1991.

But the 20th Congress was not only the famous Speech, but much more. During its sessions, a set of measures was approved that represented a radical break with Leninist principles. Faced with the Leninist conception of the inevitability of imperialist wars, *“The 20th Congress of the CPSU reached the conclusion that in contemporary international conditions, real possibilities have been created to prevent wars. The thesis that proclaims the inevitability of wars in the stage of imperialism was formulated by V.I. Lenin at a time when, first, capitalism was a single and all-embracing world system and, second, social and political forces with no interest in war and acting against it were weak, insufficiently organized and, because of this, they could not force the imperialists to renounce war.*

“Of course, as long as imperialism exists, the economic basis for the emergence of wars continues to be maintained and therefore all the forces of peace must remain vigilant. However, in these new conditions, when the all-powerful socialist camp has been formed, when the movement of all the people for peace is growing in all countries and when, in addition to the socialist countries, there are other States addicted to peace, there are real possibilities of preventing the imperialists from unleashing a new world war.”



Comrade Raul Marcos, co-author of this article, died on October 16, 2020, in the midst of the preparation of this issue.

(History of the CPSU, Moscow, 1960. Pages 800 and 801 – translated from the Spanish).

The 20th Congress also declared that peace was the main task of the international politics of the USSR, promoting peaceful coexistence; it was clearly betting on the peaceful and parliamentary path to socialism, liquidating the dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR and establishing the passage to communism, claiming that social contradictions had practically disappeared. In short, a whole series of policies that had little to do with those developed by Lenin and Stalin and that were committed to a conciliation with imperialism.

In order to carry out what we could call the “New Course”, a purge was carried out in the leadership positions: of 19 top leaders, members and alternate members of the Presidium of the C.C. and secretaries of the C.C., 6 were dismissed as members of the Presidium of C.C. (Malenkov, Kaganovich, Molotov, Shepilov, Bulganin and Saburov, the first four also being expelled from the Central Committee) and one was demoted to being an alternate member of the Presidium (Pervukhin); furthermore, the Defense Minister, Marshal Zhukov, was removed from office.

Soviet revisionism encountered strong opposition from the Communist Party of China and the Party of Labor of Albania (PLA), as seen at the Conference of 81 Communist Party held in Moscow from November 10 to December 1, 1960. The speech given on November 16 by Comrade Enver Hoxha, who headed the PLA delegation, denouncing the Khrushchevite positions and upholding the figure of Stalin, is noteworthy:

“Stalin was severely and unjustly condemned on this question by Comrade Khrushchev and the 20th Congress. Comrade Stalin and his work do not belong to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and to the Soviet peoples alone, but to all of us.... Why was Comrade Stalin condemned at the 20th Congress without prior consultation with the other communist and workers’ parties of the world? Why was this ‘anathema’, pronounced upon Stalin, sprung without warning on the communist and workers’ parties of the world, and why did many fraternal parties learn of it only when the imperialist press blazoned Comrade Khrushchev’s ‘secret’ report far and wide?” (Hoxha, Enver: Selected Works, Tirana, 1960, Volume III. pages 155-156.)

At this point, we must ask ourselves about the causes that led to the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party and, beyond the Soviet experience, what happened in the rest of the communist parties. The answer is enormously complex and what we are aiming at here are some observations that must be studied and analyzed in depth.

In the first place, a communist party does not operate in a vacuum. On the contrary, its practice consists in establishing a close relationship with the popular masses, understanding their aspirations, their feelings, their state of mind. But these masses are not communists; there are elements of all kinds in them. The Party, therefore, is subjected to very diverse ideological influences and this has repercussions on the communist members.

A second aspect to consider is the class composition of the communist party. The workers' component tends to be the majority, but it also includes intellectuals coming from the petty bourgeoisie, self-employed professionals, etc. And, finally, one must take into account the fact that, even when in power, a communist party cannot avoid the intense class struggle that develops in the building of socialism.

All this was reflected in the Bolshevik Party and gave rise to intense debates and struggle between factional tendencies. Democratic centralism could not prevent social reality from being reflected in the organic life of the party. To ignore all these aspects is to fail to recognize the fundamental principle of dialectical materialism. There are no monolithically communist militants. We are all affected by the struggle of opposites, by communist principles, by ideological traits of the petty bourgeoisie and by cultural and social prejudices that the ruling classes have imposed on us. Overcoming this contradiction is not an easy task. It necessitates political and ideological training, militant discipline, self-criticism. And, on the part of the leading bodies, it entails the need for uncompromising revolutionary vigilance. This does not mean an inquisitorial control of the life of the members, but on the contrary, knowing how to detect attitudes contrary and harmful to the life of the Party.

This is an aspect that, in our opinion, has been neglected in the life of a communist party. It is essential to establish bonds of brotherhood among comrades, of mutual solidarity. It is not a question of all of us being friends, but of establishing certain effective networks that allow us to help a comrade who has doubts.

Returning to the thread of our story, starting with the aforementioned Conference the CPSU slid down a revisionist slope in an unstoppable way. Khrushchev's fall from grace did not change the political situation in the country. Although the USSR continued to be a reference point for millions of workers, its practice was far from any revolutionary formulation. The vast majority of communist parties followed the same path as the party that for decades had been the undisputed reference. But dissenting voices were emerging within communist organizations, as had happened before and during the First World War. Honest communists questioned the official decisions and ended up breaking with the revisionist leaderships. It was a difficult and painful decision, but a necessary one. In our country, comrades Raúl Marco and Elena Ódena, consistent communists, decided to break with the leadership of the PCE and in 1964 founded the Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist), which has always held high the banners of the struggle for the socialism and the Republic.

The disintegration of the USSR in 1991, the disappearance of the so-called "real socialism" in Eastern Europe, the fall of the socialist regime in Albania, constituted a terrible blow not only for all communists, but for all the popular classes in the world. The bourgeoisie did not miss the occasion to try to bury communism once and for all. It did not succeed, but it was able to sow anti-communist sentiment in the ranks of the working class itself. The parties and organizations that make up the ICMLPO have a difficult and complicated task ahead of us. Among our tasks we must carry out an exhaustive analysis of what happened in the USSR between 1917 and 1991. We must draw lessons from that historical experience to avoid repeating the mistakes and know how to orient ourselves in the future.

With a view to the next tasks of the ICMLPO, from our party we propose the formation of a commission to carry out an in-depth study on the history of the Soviet Union and the countries called people's democracies with the purpose of clarifying the profound causes that led to the degeneration of the Soviet State and its definitive disintegration in 1991. We consider that this task cannot be postponed in order to counter bourgeois propaganda and train young communists.

We also consider it essential that all the Marxist-Leninist parties carry out a rigorous task of political and ideological training of

their members. Without theoretical training there is no revolutionary practice. We are obviously not referring to memorizing quotes from the Marxist classics, but to understanding and putting into practice the teachings of historical and dialectical materialism. The greater the Marxist training of a comrade, the more impervious he becomes to revisionism and to the ideological propaganda of the ruling classes,

The flame that was lit in October 1917 in the city of Petrograd continues to illuminate us and shows us the way. The end of the Soviet experience is not the end of socialism. It does not constitute a final end as the bourgeoisie claims. A set of extremely complex circumstances led to the disappearance of the USSR, but we are left with an indelible lesson: it is possible to live without exploitation; a dignified life for all is possible, where solidarity, dignity and freedom are the values preside over our existence.

Very soon millions of men and women will take up the struggle; they will form part of a renewed communist army that will continue fighting until final victory, until the building of a socialist world.

*Raul Marco / Carlos Hermida
Madrid, September 2020*

Friedrich Engels: the Journey of a Great Thinker and an Outstanding Activist

1. Friedrich Engels was not only Karl Marx's companion:

Several biographies, studies and intellectual, political and historical contributions tend to portray Friedrich Engels as the comrade and friend of Karl Marx. This is of course obvious to everyone. Indeed, Engels and Marx formed a philosophical and militant pair, rare if not unique in history. But some historians and researchers attempt explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously, to reduce the pair to this dimension. To always mention Engels as the friend of Marx is important and fundamental in itself, as Engels himself recognized. But, what we will seek to highlight in this article, written on the occasion of the bicentenary of his birth, is the eminent role of Engels on the various fronts of intellectual, theoretical and practical struggle before, during, and after his meeting with Marx. The contributions of Engels were essential for the achievement of scientific socialism. They brought it clarity and maturity, both in the definition of fundamental knowledge and in the formulation of concrete answers to the problems and questions put to the socialists and the communists during the second half of the 19th century.

1.1 Who was Friedrich Engels?

Engels was born on November 28, 1820 in Bremen in the Rhineland. At the time, the Rhineland was the most developed industrial region in Germany, while most of the country was still under the rule of feudalism and manual labor.

It is also a region rich in deposits (iron, coal) in addition to its significant agricultural potential, as it is located on the banks of the Rhine. It is in this region that feudalism experienced its decline and that capitalism developed, in particular thanks to its proximity with France, on which it depended (1795-1815) and to the Napoleon code which confirmed the abolition of the feudalism and the end of the seigniorial regime.

Engels came from a wealthy family of textile manufacturers. Despite his belonging to a bourgeois family, from an early age he was attentive to the difficult conditions and misery in which the working class and workers were plunged. He had written a text when he was not yet 18 years old, describing with great precision the living conditions of the artisans and the workers in industry. He had realized that the "tyranny of the owners of the out of control factories" was the cause of these miserable conditions. This text was published with other articles in 1839 in a book entitled "Letters from Wuppertal". He particularly observed the conditions of workers and artisans in the textile industry, in which his father had a factory. He described with great precision the sufferings of the weavers ruined by the fierce competition of the big industrialists like his father.

The young Friedrich Engels had also realized the hypocrisy of the religious belonging to the current of Protestantism: pietism. They played a dangerous role in the service of the ruling classes and in the enslavement of the poor classes. These hypocrites shaped "public opinion" and guided it, as Engels wrote. They sowed illusions and diverted the workers from the struggle by using the Bible and alcohol. The "meetings of the faithful" turned into a "trial of heretics", that is to say of those who intended or worked to free themselves from the exploitative regime. The young Engels also realized that the school adopted the same methods in teaching, to serve the same goals and the same interests.

It was the young Engels who had not yet met his comrade in arms Marx, who had not yet discovered socialist and revolutionary ideas.

Engels was the oldest of a family of four boys and four girls. His father, this authoritarian bourgeois, waited for his eldest son to grow up to entrust him with the management of the family's factories, as was the custom in Wuppertal, the metropolis of the textile industry, nicknamed the "German Manchester". But this son would be a socialist leader and a great communist a few years later. He rebelled against his family and against its customs and traditions in order to embrace a diametrically opposed view from a young age. Engels published a letter that his father addressed to his mother when he was not yet 15, expressing his concerns:

“As you know, he has become more polite, outwardly, but in spite of the severe chastisements he received earlier, not even the fear of punishment seems to teach him unconditional obedience.

Thus today I was again distressed to find in his desk a greasy book which he had borrowed from the lending library, a story about knights in the 13th century... May God watch over his disposition, I am often fearful for this otherwise excellent boy" (Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 582).

The father's being "fearful" was justified; in fact the young Engels was not content to reject "unconditional obedience", he decided to take his destiny in hand and follow his reason, far from the road his father wanted. Eleanor Marx, the youngest daughter of Marx who loved her father's comrade and family friend very much, said that: "Engels was out of favor in his family" (Memoirs of Marx and Engels, second Arabic edition, Moscow 1983, part one, p. 128). Among the signs of this was the interest this child showed from his first steps in school, in art, music, history, literature and languages. He also wrote poems and drew caricatures. He also enjoyed sports, especially swimming, horseback riding and fencing, interests that accompanied him throughout his life.

Despite his exceptional intelligence, the pressure from his family forced Engels to drop out of school at the age of 17. He was unable to finish high school and enter college. The genius went to work in his father's factories

in Bremen. It was in this industrial city with a large commercial port that Engels began a new chapter in his life. He followed newspapers with great motivation, especially those from England, Holland and France. It was in this context that he was able to read underground German newspapers and publications. His love for languages made it easier for him to read these journals, but the diversity of this subject also



prompted him to learn others. He was gifted at learning languages, which had a significant impact on his later intellectual development. It was at this point in his life that he began to ask himself big questions, such as those relating to religion and the Gospel. Moreover, he began to raise the internal contradictions of this book and its irrationality. In a letter addressed to his friend Friedrich Graeber on June 15, 1839, he wrote: "I know that I am going to get into the greatest unpleasantness through this, but what forces itself on me so convincingly, I cannot drive away... when it is a matter of defending the freedom of reason, then I protest against all compulsion" (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 456).

It should be noted that Engels wrote this letter when he was the guest of a religious friend of his father. The latter, very religious, was worried about the spiritual development of his son, so he forced him to share accommodations with this friend. Reading David Strass's book "The Life of Jesus", published in 1836, made a strong impression on Engels and revealed to him the connection between religion and mythology throughout the history of mankind. The criticism of religion awakened Engels to the social and political questions which began to concern him and which were to bring about a qualitative transformation in his spirit and his practice.

1.2 Friedrich Engels, the pre-Marxist:

The evolution of the consciousness of Engels in his youth, when he had just moved to Bremen, coincided with important changes in society throughout the old continent. The bourgeoisie began to emerge on the political scene to the detriment of feudalism and the lords, in England and France which knew a revolutionary effervescence (the revolution of 1830, local and sectorial uprisings like the uprising of the textile sector in Lyon the years 1831/1834...). These upheavals affected Germany dominated by feudalism, which prompted the Prussian state to strengthen its tyranny to guard against possible waves of revolution. It was in this authoritarian and repressive context that opposition currents began to develop. They took the form of intellectual, cultural and philosophical clubs, much like what had happened in France and England two centuries earlier. It was during this period that the philosophical and political current of the "young Hegelians" or "left Hegelians" stood out. Initially, this current was an open gathering bringing together students and young people influenced by Hegelian philoso-

phy, and more particularly by the dialectical approach adopted by Hegel to study the phenomena of the universe. If Hegel was indeed "the philosopher of the state", his dialectical current was basically progressive in comparison with the metaphysical approaches which dominated idealist philosophy. Hegel's dialectic brought to light the global and fundamental law which governs nature, that of movement expressing the struggle of opposites and governing phenomena. But Hegel deduced from this that this whole, that is to say the movement of existence, composed of nature and society, was linked to the movement of mind and reason in history, that is, the absolute idea preceding the existence of the world, which Hegel translated by the principle of "the autonomous evolution of the spirit", spirit dissociated from matter. This idealist consequence of Hegel's dialectic was reflected in his clearly backward political positions. He reduced his reading, despite its historical character, to the past. He saw the monarchy as the product of history, but at the same time he advocated that the state of Frederick William III was an ideal state which would not evolve and would not disappear.

This contradiction between the progressive dialectical vision and the retrograde positions was the object of the work of a whole current of disciples of Hegel, who wanted to develop progressive positions implementing the dialectical vision of the world through its application to society and to social and political life. This current succeeded in developing radical positions on different levels. The context of repression, which reigned in Germany throughout the first half of the 19th century, pushed the Hegelian youth to adopt the method of camouflage by privileging the intellectual aspect to the detriment of political questions. Religion was one of their favorite subjects. This approach could be explained by the impact of religion on social life and its role in the distortion of consciousness and its alignment in favor of reactionary feudalism.

Engels was influenced by this atmosphere in which he asserted himself forcefully. In his letter to his friend Friedrich Graeber, on January 21, 1840 he wrote: "Through Strauss, I have now entered on the straight to Hegelianism" (Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 489). He made it clear to his friend that he was studying Hegel's "philosophy of history" extensively. This reading was critical, however; in his letter he made it clear that he could not "be a conservative Hegelian." Thanks to his keen intelligence, he realized the limits of Hegel's thought, but also the inadequacies of the Hege-

lian left. The latter was confined to philosophical and intellectual research, giving special attention to the question of religion, to the detriment of the attention that had to be paid to life and practice, particularly on the political level, which requires seriousness and courage.

The independent and creative personality of Friedrich Engels began to take shape, the beginnings of his revolutionary spirit and practice began to manifest themselves.

In this regard, Engels admired the orientations of Ludwig Börne, whom he considered "a great activist for justice and freedom" because he was vigilant in criticizing the tendency of scholars, thinkers and philosophers to abstraction and the adoption of pure theories to escape reality in its complexities, difficulties and challenges. L. Börne believed that the pen should be a weapon in the social and political struggle, a weapon to awaken people from their slumber. It was this awareness that was to be expressed through the texts and poems published by the young Engels in the review *German Telegraph*, a Hamburg publication of the cultural association "Young Germany" marked by the ideas of the revolutionary poet Heinrich Heine and the writer and critic Ludwig Börne. It was in the columns of this review that Engels published his first writings of social criticism, as part of a series of articles grouped together in the *Letters of Wuppertal* and dealing with the conditions of the workers and the poor in general.

The personality of Engels the revolutionary democrat began to emerge. He said of King Frederick William III: "this same shabby, rotten goddamned king... There was never a time richer in royal crimes than that of 1816-1830" (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 493). Engels was not content to criticize the situation; he called for implementing deep democratic reforms in his country, starting with the unification of Germany, which was split into 34 small states and four autonomous cities. In his writings he also mocked racist and chauvinist tendencies representing the Germans as being a "chosen people".

His joining in the army in 1841 as a volunteer did not prevent him from following the intellectual and political debates taking place at the university, which he ended up joining as a free auditor. Among the most famous leaders of these debates were the brothers Edgar and Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner, Karl Cobain, and others. It should be noted that at this time Marx had just left Berlin, after hav-

ing been one of the main leaders of the circles of the Hegelian youth.

Engels finished his military service with a diploma in marksmanship. He brilliantly studied military science, which he thought would be useful to him in the future. This was the case, both during the revolutions in which he participated or also those he mentioned in his writings, which earned him the title of "general" from Marx.

During his time in Berlin he wrote philosophical articles and in 1842 published two pamphlets criticizing Schelling's philosophy: "*Schelling into Divine Wisdom; For Believing Christians Who Do Not Know the Language of Philosophy*," the *and Revelation*" and "*Schelling, Philosopher in Christ, or the Transfiguration of Worldly Wisdom*," the two publications were unsigned. By attacking Schelling and his philosophy, Engels combated its reactionary content, and at the same time exposed the dirty role of Shelling at the University of Berlin. Indeed, the state had called on his services to fight the ideas of the Hegelian left, whose followers were subject to prosecution and harassment.

The writings of Engels and his lectures at the university provided a profound critique of Schelling's attempts to reconcile scientific knowledge and religion.

Once again, Engels showed consciousness when he asserted that: "All the basic principles of Christianity, and even of what has hitherto been called religion itself, have fallen before the inexorable criticism of reason" (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 197).

At that time, the young Engels was influenced by the book "*The Essence of Christianity*" by Ludwig Feuerbach, published in 1841 and bearing a materialist critique of religion.

Engels' writings on Shelling's philosophy aroused the admiration of many people, including Arnold Ruge, who in the columns of his journal *The German Gazette* wondered who the doctor was, the author of the unsigned pamphlet "*Schelling and the Revelation*". Engels replied that he was not a doctor. "I am young and self-taught in philosophy. I have learnt enough to form my own viewpoint and, when necessary, to defend it" (Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 545). Engels refused to write in Ruge's journal.

Engels also deepened his criticism of the group "Young Germany", which was only a disdainful group, devoid of principles, lacking in the courage and daring to defend political positions.

In October 1842, the young Engels finished his military service. His father sent him to England to run a branch of his company. Engels arrived in London in November to begin a new stage in his life, in his intellectual progression and in his militant commitment.

2. Engels, comrade of Marx, founder of scientific socialism

Having arrived in England, Engels found himself in a world completely different from his native Germany, at the heart of capitalism, in a country that had already seen decades of transformations from agricultural feudalism to industrial capitalism.

Engels naturally grasped the situation of the proletariat, which reaped from this industry nothing but misery and exploitation. This was precisely what he showed with infinite precision in his book "*The Condition of the Working Class in England*", which he concluded with an appeal to the English proletariat:

“I wanted to see you in your homes, to observe you in your everyday life, to chat with you on your conditions and grievances, to witness your struggles against the social and political power of your oppressors... I the company and dinner-parties, the port-wine and champagne of the middle classes, and devoted my leisure hours almost exclusively to the intercourse with plain Working-Men; I am both glad and proud of having done so”.

With this little book, so big in content and in this appeal, the young Engels took an enormous step towards his new convictions and his new ideology: socialism, to which he would actively contribute in order to elaborate and make what had only been a dream into a science.

Engels' arrival in England coincided with the birth of the Chartist movement, a movement he became close to. He participated in its activities, consulted its literature and established links with its leaders, especially those on the left wing. He became one of the notable writers of the *North Star* journal.

He also connected with supporters of the utopian socialist Robert Owen, and contributed to their newspaper *The New Moral World*.

In his articles, Engels endeavored to spread information about other European countries, to enable English workers to communicate with their comrades in Europe, and to prevent them from turning in on themselves.

At the same time, he continued his ideological / philosophical reflections which had started in his city of Bremen. He wrote to debate Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling and others. He raised the importance of the opinion of young Hegelians in his article "*Progress of Social Reform on the Continent*". He said that they were able to deduce that political changes were not enough, and that only social revolution based on collective ownership would allow the emergence of a social order in line with their abstract principles. In this article, he quoted some left-wing Hegelians such as Karl Marx.

With these ideas, Engels already came to communist ideology, which had not yet been scientifically elaborated.

Two elements contributed to the ideological evolution of Engels. The first was intellectual through his uncompromising criticism of idealism and his gradual evolution towards philosophical materialism. The second was social, through his links with the working class and his study of their conditions, which would empower them to carry out the project of social and historical change.

His article "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy", published in February 1844 in the journal *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (*German-French Annals*) edited by Marx and Arnold Ruge, marked this turning point. Marx noted that this was an exceptional manuscript which laid down the general principles of scientific socialism.

It was precisely these manuscripts that prompted Marx to study bourgeois political economy and begin his critique.

Engels also published articles in the newspaper *Républicain Suisse* (Swiss Republican) and the German newspaper *En avant* (*Forwards*) which appeared in France. He explained his political and sociological analyses.

He closely followed the development of the class struggle in England. He also studied the Chartist movement whose great ability he emphasized, but also its errors, when it maintained that the only way to the revolution was the legal way through the vote. He also criticized the utopian socialist supporters of Owen, Saint Simon and Fourier.

It was in August 1844 that an event took place which would definitively mark Engels' thought and practice. This was his meeting with Karl Marx; they spent ten days together, "ten days that shook the world", as John Reed would say about the Bolshevik revolution 70 years after this meeting.

In her biography of Engels, Stepanova stated that the meeting of the pair in Paris marked the beginning of their friendship, and the beginning of an unparalleled alliance that would bring them together all their lives. This alliance of two great minds armed the working class, through revolutionary theory and the bases of strategy and tactics.

This was their second meeting, the first rather brief and cold. It was at the premises of the *Rheinische Zeitung* (*Rhine Gazette*) edited by Marx. The latter was reluctant to publish articles by Engels, whom he found very close to liberal supporters of the Bauer brothers. This lack of enthusiasm very quickly dissipated in the face of the clarity and depth of Engels's writings. Marx then requested that Engels become the newspaper's correspondent in England, which he did.

At this second meeting, they decided to unite their efforts to conceptualize scientific socialism, and to engage in the struggle of the working class, a commitment to which they dedicated themselves for the rest of their lives.

The pair represented a unique example of thought and activism. This is what allowed Lenin to say that the European proletariat can claim that its knowledge was the legacy of two militant thinkers, whose personal connections far exceeded what myths could tell about their friendship.

Thus began a unique collaboration between the two men, who published "The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism; Against Bruno Bauer and Company" in 1845. Besides a response to Bauer and his supporters, they marked their distances from the idealist Hegelian philosophy, without however breaking with the influence of Feuerbach. They also laid the groundwork for historical materialism, claiming that only the popular masses make history.

When Engels returned to Bremen, he soon became involved in the struggles of the workers and the socialists, but he found himself forced into exile due to the harassment suffered by his family.

He left for Brussels, where he found his companion Marx, who had also just been expelled from France after the closure of his newspaper "*En avant*" at the demand of the German state.

Together, they went to England to meet the English workers' and socialist movement as well as the German members of "The League of the Just" in exile. To the two movements, they proposed the creation of a united framework, which would emerge under the

name of "Fraternal Democrats" and which would later constitute the foundation of the Communist International.

In their manuscript "The German Ideology" Marx and Engels clearly developed their conception of the world and of history, thus laying the theoretical and philosophical foundations of scientific socialism.

At the same time, they made considerable efforts to unite the communists into a unified organization, hence the birth of the "Communist Correspondence Committees" in January 1849 in Brussels. These were a link between the communist and proletarian circles in England, France, Germany and Belgium. These committees were also a field for debate and struggle against utopian and anarchist currents.

Engels played a very active role in these committees; he carried out militant missions to Paris and elsewhere, and he wrote numerous works in which he recounted his travels, shared his remarks and developed his ideas. He was a driving force in the development of the scientific communist orientation of these committees, thus marking their difference from other currents.

This development marked the German communist movement including "The League of the Just", which sought the adhesion of Marx and Engels who officially joined the congress of June 1847, even though Marx was unable to attend.

Engels' involvement gave a resolutely communist orientation to the organization which became the "Communist League"; it abandoned its slogan "All men are brothers" for a new one who is none other than "Workers of the world, unite!"

Its second congress in December 1847 discussed the program described by Engels in his book *The Principles of Communism*. This book marked a break with utopian, anarchist and conspiratorial thought and replaced it with scientific and revolutionary thought. It was the prelude to the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* which appeared in February 1848.

Referring to this *Manifesto*, Lenin stated: "With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines the new world conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life, dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat – the creator of a new, communist society."

The release of the *Manifesto* marked a fundamental change not only on the ideological level but also in the militant program of the communist movement. It became a kind of constitution for this nascent movement, especially in view of the revolutionary context of 1848 and 1849 in the old continent. Engels naturally took part, notably through the conceptualization of the movement's strategic and tactical program.

The publication of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung (New Rhine Gazette)* under Marx's editorship provided a revolutionary platform, where Engels, a member of the editorial board, devoted his pen to promoting the movement through his inspirational writings. Marx, who took on the political leadership, declared that his comrade Engels was a veritable encyclopedia, able to work day and night at any time.

In these numerous articles, Engels dealt with capitalism, considering that its development and its concentration would sooner or later provoke in the oppressed peoples their aspiration for liberation and the advent of large patriotic movements, which was the case among the Slavic peoples as well as later among the peoples of the south and the east.

The editorial board of the new gazette took on the role of political leadership and on the ground, replacing the leadership of the Communist League. It organized meetings with the workers, where Engels was one of the keynote speakers.

Despite the defeat of the revolutionary momentum and the cessation of publication of the newspaper, the rich lessons learned were instructive. Engels was actively involved in evaluating this experience and the reasons for the defeat. This naturally contributed to nourishing his reflection and that of his comrade Marx, and enriched their experience in anticipation of the battles to come.



It was in this context that he published "The Campaign for the Constitution of the Reich ...", in which he made an assessment of the uprising of 1848 and 1849 in Germany and Europe.

When Marx was driven from Paris to London, Engels again joined him and a new stage of militant partnership began between the two comrades, deeply involved in the work of reconstituting the movement and the party.

Engels wrote his *Letters from France* and *Letters from Germany*, he prefaced the book *Class Struggle in France* authored by Marx, and contributed to the reappearance of the *New Rhine Gazette / Critique of Political Economy*. He wrote *The Peasants' War in Germany* and then *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*. In this last book, he returned to the subjective and objective causes of the failure of the revolution, providing details of a local, regional and international nature, before concluding with the conditions essential for a future victory.

On the occasion of the trials of the German communists, he distinguished himself by his role as agitator, while confronting the left and right tendencies that emerged after the defeat of the revolution and the divisions in the "Communist League".

The years that followed were marked by the dominance of reaction, which led to the separation of Marx and Engels, but the pair continued their commitment and their common work of reflection through their correspondence. Stacks of letters exchanged dealt with philosophical, economic, scientific, militant and other subjects; this correspondence would surely allow the elaboration of their thoughts.

These exchanges went beyond the militant framework, and Engels was the example of a communist. He took on the responsibility of helping Marx and his family materially, although he was embarrassed by the modesty of this help as he was only a modest employee in his father's companies, and although he did not hesitate to deprive himself to guarantee a minimum to his comrade. He also agreed to sign his articles in the name of Marx in the progressive U.S. newspaper *New York Daily Tribune* and in the *New American Encyclopedia* so that his comrade could be paid.

His articles in the progressive U.S. press revealed Engels' military talents, through his analysis of the military aspects of the German revolution, but also of major events that shook the world (Chi-

na, India, the Spanish occupation of Morocco, the U.S. Civil War, etc.).

He wrote 67 articles for the *New American Encyclopedia* on the army, artillery, fortifications, etc.

He developed a scientific view of the art of war in his essay *Anti-Dühring*.

He was also passionate about languages; he mastered the main European languages, in addition to Greek, Latin, Russian, Persian and Scandinavian languages. He spoke 12 languages fluently and read 20. This surely facilitated the writing of his book *The Role of Labor in the transition from Ape to Man* in 1876, and later on *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* in 1884.

He also liked poetry and literature, hence his writings on realist aesthetics and his polemics with his detractors, which undeniably contributed to the development of the Marxist aesthetic and the foundations of realism in literature and art.

He also studied the natural sciences, physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics and logic, etc. which made possible the writing of his work "Dialectic of Nature", which was not published until 1925, years after his death.

Engels the human being is clearly shown when he lost his wife in 1863, who died from heart disease. He confided to Marx about his pain; he had lived with her for a long time. Her death had a devastating effect on him; he said that with her he buried what remained of his youth.

When Marx fell ill after having just finished the first part of *Capital*, Engels urged him to make only one concession – to himself and his family – of taking care of himself. He told him of his fears if something would happen to him; he confided that he would not know peace, day or night, until he got rid of this problem, because on the days when he did not receive his letters, he imagined that his condition had again worsened.

After the ebb that followed the revolutionary defeat, the prerequisites of a workers' uprising began to emerge in the early 1860s. This made the unification of all revolutionaries, the "International Workers Association" urgent. It was born on February 28, 1864, thanks to the considerable efforts of Engels and Marx; this was the First International.

It brought together most of the socialist currents, in particular the supporters of Lassalle and Proudhon. Bringing all these parts

together was no easy task, but the genius of Engels and Marx helped to overcome the pitfalls and difficulties, while ensuring the realization of its inaugural manifesto and its rules of procedure.

In recounting this period, Engels acknowledged that it was difficult to formulate their thinking in a way suited to the workers' movement of that time before revealing that it would take some time for this nascent movement to return to the old bold discourse, which required firmness in principles and flexibility in tactics.

In 1865 Engels published "The Prussian Military Question and the German Workers' Party", a book against the supporters of Lassalle; he refuted their arguments of support to the reactionary Prussian government. This resulted in the birth of the "German Social Democrat Party".

Engels greatly contributed to the success of its founding congress, by publishing a biography of Marx. Through this biography he provided proof of the authenticity of his comrade's thought and of his role in the face of Lassalle's opportunism and revisionism. His criticisms of Lassalle touched on many ideological and scientific questions. This work enabled the supporters of the pair to better handle conflicts with other workers' movements.

Engels also helped with the publication of the first volume of *Capital*, as Marx sent him all his writings to seek his advice.

When *Capital* was published, it caused a shock wave in bourgeois circles, which opposed it with a deafening silence. It was then that Engels implemented a brilliant strategy. In agreement with Marx, they publish numerous unsigned articles, criticizing the book from a bourgeois point of view, but which implicitly exposed the flaws of the capitalist economy and its theories. It was a successful strategy because it forced a debate on the content of the book.

During the advent of the new revolutionary waves during the 1870s, in particular the Paris Commune in 1871, the pair still played an active role in the aftermath of the revolutionary events, while ensuring the drawing of lessons to develop the revolutionary class vision. This is precisely what Marx stated in his book *The Civil War in France*. He broke definitively with all socialism before Marxism, which had as a consequence the paralysis of the International from 1874, before its official dissolution in 1876.

This new context of setbacks to the communist movement and the dissolution of the International imposed new urgencies on the

pair, such as the need to create socialist workers' parties in various countries.

At the same time, Engels continued his numerous publications in the press, while keeping an eye on the evolution of the movement in Germany. He did not fail to express his criticisms on the occasion of the Unification Congress of the Workers' Party and the Lassalle Movement in Gotha. He criticized the haste in which this unification took place and the their erroneous position regarding the state.

It was this point that Lenin considered the best of what Marx and Engels wrote about the state.

In 1880, Engels published his book *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, as part of his critical articles against Dühring. But his writings also concerned the leaders of the German party and their reformist orientations, especially after their entry into parliament and the broadening of their electoral base.

He also confronted leftist currents like that of Most and his followers, who contented themselves with insulting the right-wing aims without providing an alternative.

He did not just follow the events in his country, because he attached great importance to developments all over the world. This responsibility was further increased with the death of his comrade Marx on March 14, 1883. He wrote to Becker: "The most powerful intellect our party possessed had ceased to think, the stoutest heart I have ever known was beating no more." before confiding to him that they were probably the only ones alive among the old ones from before 1848. Moreover, they were still true to their principles and even if the blows rained down and their friends wavered they would not be afraid!

3. Friedrich Engels after Karl Marx: the thinker and leader

Engels lived for 12 more years after the death of Marx. He devoted these last years of his life to fighting on all fronts, stepping up his efforts to fill the void left by the departure of his comrade.

The first task he set himself was to finalize and publish *Capital*. Marx had left a draft and confided to his daughter Eleanor that "Engels should produce something from these notes". That was what he did.

The first difficulty was to decipher Marx's handwriting, which was known to be very bad. Engels accomplished this task despite his illness, although Marx had finalized only two parts of this work;

six others were unfinished ideas. After the publication of the second volume of *Capital* in February 1885, Engels immediately began writing the next one. This third volume was to sum up the recent developments of the capitalist economy and the various syntheses; its writing spanned ten years.

Lenin stated without hesitation that "these two volumes of *Capital* are the work of two men Marx and Engels" (Lenin, "Frederick Engels," in his *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 26).

At the same time, Engels carried out other work: writing several articles, new editions of the books of Marx, translations, etc. He also wrote his major work: *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, thus granting the wishes of his comrade Marx. Marx's notes on the book *Ancient Society* by the scholar Lewis Henry Morgan were very useful to Engels in writing this work. Lenin stated [in reference to *Origins of the Family...*] that: "every sentence... can be accepted with confidence, in the assurance that it has not been said at random but is based on immense historical and political material" (Lenin, "The State," *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 473).

In 1888, Engels published his book *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, in which he emphasized the role of Hegelian idealism and L. Feuerbach's materialism in the development of dialectical materialist philosophy. He also pointed out their fundamental inadequacies, to conclude the supremacy of Marxism and its importance. The letters of Engels addressed to Joseph Bloch, Franz Mehring and Ernest on historical materialism constitute his most formidable and mature writings on the subject, because he tore apart the vulgar approaches of historical materialism which considered that the economy is the mechanical driving force of history and that ideas and the superstructure are a mere reflection of it. Engels wrote the following to J. Bloch on September 21, 1890: "According to the materialist view of history, the determining factor in history is, in the final analysis, the production and reproduction of actual life. More than that was never maintained either by Marx or my-self. Now if someone distorts this by declaring the economic moment to be the only determining factor, he changes that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, ridiculous piece of jargon. The economic situation is the basis, but the various factors of the superstructure — political forms of the class struggle and its consequences, namely constitutions set up by the ruling class

after a victorious battle, etc., forms of law and, the reflections of all these real struggles in the minds of the participants, i.e. political, philosophical and legal theories, religious views and the expansion of the same into dogmatic systems — all these factors also have a bearing on the course of the historical struggles of which, in many cases, they largely determine the form."

There is nothing clearer and more precise than these ideas to confirm the dialectical basis of Marxism. Moreover, Engels himself said that Marxism is a guide to action and not a dogma, as some people claiming to be Marxists proclaimed during Engels's lifetime or much later.

Engels did not restrict himself to intellectual struggle; he was also engaged in militant activity despite the difficulties and complexity of the context. He wrote to Johann Philipp Becker [on October 15, 1884]: "I have spent a lifetime doing what I was fitted for, namely playing second fiddle, and indeed I believe I acquitted myself reasonably well. And I was happy to have so splendid a first fiddle as Marx. But now that I am suddenly expected to take Marx's place in matters of theory and play first fiddle, there will inevitably be blunders and no one is more aware of that than I. And not until the times get somewhat more turbulent shall we really be aware of what we have lost in Marx. Not one of us possesses the breadth of vision that enabled him, at the very moment when rapid action was called for, invariably to hit upon the right solution and at once get to the heart of the matter. In more peaceful times it could happen that events proved me right and him wrong, but at a revolutionary juncture his judgment was virtually infallible." (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 47, p. 202).

At the end of the 1880s, socialist parties were founded in most European countries. This again imposed the need for an internationalist framework to coordinate and unify the action of the socialists. The Second International was formed on July 14, 1889 in Paris. Engels played a heroic and decisive role in the fight against right-wing, reformist and leftist tendencies, which sought to get hold of the project. The founding congress of the Second International declared May 1 to be the international festival of the proletariat; for Engels, this decision was an important and striking victory in the process of the struggle of the working class.

During his participation in the third congress in Zurich in 1893, Engels was very touched by the greatness of the reception which

was given to him, but in his speech he stated that this reception was a victory of the great man whose portrait adorned the room (obviously he was talking about Marx).

Engels was the guide and the leader of the International and its parties, in particular of the French and German parties. He opposed the deviation of the agrarian program of the French Workers' Party. This program not only defended the property of small farmers, but also that of medium and large exploiters. He fought leftism and the adventurous tendency among the "young" of the German party. The latter adopted this name and published their own magazine *Le journal des ouvriers saxons* (*Journal of Saxon Workers*). Most of them slipped into opportunism and served the authorities after their expulsion from the party at the Erfurt Congress.

Engels also fought the right-wing line of certain leaders of the German Social Democratic Party, in particular their theses on peaceful evolution towards socialism through parliamentarism. Engels always warned against tendencies which would harm socialism. Leftism neglects any interest in the legal struggle and falls into voluntarism, just like the right-wing and legalist tendencies which conceived of socialism only through the legal framework and institutions. Engels spoke out against the attempt to manipulate him by the leadership of the German Social Democratic Party into positions that he rejected. The German party newspaper published excerpts from Engels' introduction to the book "Class Struggles in France", suggesting that he was among the "peaceful supporters of legalism, whatever the cost". Engels asked Liebknecht to clear up this confusion, of which he was not proud. He briefed the leaders of the European socialist movement to draw attention to right-wing attempts that might develop within parties or among their leaders and activists.

The efforts exerted by Engels on the intellectual level and to republish his books and those of his comrade Marx with updated prefaces did not prevent him from following the development of the workers' and socialist movement and the struggles it was waging. He followed the development of the movement in new countries; he became interested in Russia, with the birth of the "Emancipation of Labor" organization, with whose leaders he had several debates and correspondence.

Until his last days Engels remained an unwavering fighter and a proud and extremely humble leader. He declined to organize a party

in London to celebrate his birthday. He wrote to the group behind this initiative: "Marx and I have always been against all public celebrations for specific people; this is not acceptable unless one can achieve a great goal through such a manifestation. But we do not accept that it should concern our personal life."

Despite a cancer which attacked his digestive system, Engels' determination and will remained intact.

Engels died on August 5, 1895, at 10:30 p.m., the flame of his immense spirit was extinguished and his heart stopped beating.

He was great while he was alive and remains so after his death. He fully assumed his role. Together with his comrade, they bequeathed to the working class the ideology that leads to the path of victory.

4. Friedrich Engels's background and ideas are still relevant today

It is undeniable that Engels constitutes one of the most important symbols of the working class and its socialist ideology. Engels contributed actively and significantly alongside Marx to the development of scientific socialism. His contribution was substantial and decisive in building this ideology. He was not only the companion of Marx, after whom Marxism is named, since his contribution was decisive in various scientific, philosophical and economic subjects.

Although he interrupted his studies very early, obliged by his father to get involved from an early age in the management of family businesses, Engels devoted his whole life to intellectual struggle and to active engagement on the ground.

He was overflowing with inexhaustible creative energy. After working in his father's companies, his days were extended by more intense intellectual and militant activities.

From the onset of his activism, Engels never separated thought from action. He reflected, wrote and debated complex philosophical subjects, and at the same time participated in the struggles of the workers' and socialist movement. Engels dedicated his soul and spirit to socialism, which will forever be associated with his name, not only in Germany and Europe, but throughout the world.

This took place while the working class came to the fore in the social and class struggle on an international scale. Engels was a leader in Germany, England, France, Belgium, the United States,

Russia, the East and Africa, etc.; his whole being was devoted to following the smallest details of the class struggle in the world.

He dedicated his life, his energy and his material means to this struggle, which allowed for the emergence of a new world, socialism, which abolished the exploitation of one human being by another.

For all these reasons, Engels had no private life in the ordinary sense of the term, for his private life was linked to the imperatives of the intellectual and political struggle. He had learned dozens of languages and dialects, studied various sciences extensively, and followed the new theories and discoveries. Europe at this time was undergoing profound changes in the fields of knowledge and in reality.

Every day Engels read newspapers and magazines of different specialties, he wrote, debated, clarified and led the movement. He published articles in the specialized press.

Engels had rare qualities, those of geniuses and great leaders. Like his comrade Marx, he was uncompromising on principles. He did not hesitate to criticize deviations, even when they were the work of close leaders and parties.

Engels was firmly opposed to the use of his name to justify positions contrary to his principles, as was the case with parliamentarism or also with the theses of the "peaceful road to socialism", which were beginning to take hold within the German Social Democratic Party. This was the party and its leaders for which Engels had great respect. He fought with the same ardor and clarity the leftist tendencies from the experience of the "Communist League"; these tendencies were upheld by a current which rejected all legal activity. Engels opposed the "youthism" advocated by a sector of the German Social Democratic Party. For him, the struggle within the party was not based on age, but rather on positions and orientations.

Until his last breath, Engels stood for the concerns of humanity and the oppressed classes.

He fully assumed his responsibilities in a decisive historical period, whether it concerned the issues of the domination of capitalism and its establishment as a new era of humanity, or whether it concerned the achievement of scientific socialism as an ideology and project of historical social transformation, consecrating the freedom of society and of human beings.

The merit of Engels, whether from the point of view of the criticism of the capitalist system – on the economic, philosophical and scientific levels – or from the point of view of the development of the socialist alternative on the theoretical and practical level, is invaluable. Yet the man showed great modesty in considering himself as the assistant to his comrade Marx who played second fiddle to him. In reality, without this musician and without his instrument, the music would not have been created.

The journey of Engels, like that of Marx, and their ideas will remain an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the workers' and socialist movement around the world. We need it especially today, since the workers' movement and communist parties face challenges as great as those encountered during the second half of the 19th century.

The presence of outstanding leaders like Engels and the development of ideas as brilliant as those of scientific socialism, allowed the movement to progress and overcome difficulties to lead to revolutionary perspectives.

Since then, the revolutionary movement has had successes and failures, but it still continues to struggle. We must not be resigned to the difficulties; on the contrary, today's reality confirms the predictions of Engels, that from the womb of agonizing capitalism a new world would be born, socialism.

What we need today is the genius and determination like that of Engels. May his life and thoughts be our beacon in this difficult period in the world!

September 2020

Engels as an Organiser and Propagandist¹

"It has become my destiny that I reap the respect and honour, the seeds of which were sown by someone much greater than myself, Karl Marx. And I can only vow to be in the active service of the proletariat for the rest of my life to deserve this respect and honour."²

Engels is known and recognised as a scientist, philosopher and forefather of the scientific theory of communism. In these fields – considered truly to be his domain – he produced extremely important works that opened new horizons and are just as valuable today as when they were written. The importance of these works can only be appreciated when considered in relation to the trends of his day. If one is not aware of the needs of the class struggle and the fact that Engels' works are based on that struggle, he could be seen as another philosopher attempting to “enlighten humans” or “to contribute to the universe of thought”. All his works are rather a response to attacks on dialectical and historical materialism or extensive criticisms of philosophical and political visions attempted to be imposed on the proletarian masses. In this article we will focus on Engels' actions as an organiser and a propagandist and their link with his written work.

Theory of Organisation

Even though it was written by Marx, the *Manifesto* is a product of their joint effort. The ‘*Communist League*’ that asked them to undertake this was not intended to organise as a party; they stated in the first article of their constitution that they want “to spread communism as an idea”. Marx and Engels immediately pushed to change the first article and made sure it was turned into “The aim of

¹ In this article, Engels' works have been analysed from the point of view of the importance of the struggle for proletarian organisation and consciousness and in their connection with supporting this whole, rather than in chronological order.

² Friedrich Engels, Speech at the German Social Democracy Congress.

the League is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the proletariat, the abolition of the old bourgeois society which rests on the antagonism of classes, and the foundation of a new society without classes and without private property”. Following this, they also led the “*Communist League*”, which until then acted in a “*conspiratorial manner*”, to come forward as the “*Communist Party*”. Against self-proclaimed communists unable to think beyond being an association, the defence of the concept of a communist party of the proletariat is an extraordinarily revolutionary step. Beyond being a simple name change, this was a result of defining the political aim of the organisation as “seizing power, abolishing bourgeois society and building a classless society.”

In the period building up to the *Manifesto*, Engels had written the “*Communist Confession of Faith*”, which showed the differences between utopian, petty-bourgeois socialism and scientific communism, and clearly demonstrated the question of power through the birth of the proletariat and its distinct differences from other working classes that preceded it. He and Marx regularly exchanged letters while the *Confession* was written and he kept the focus on organising the proletariat and action on a revolutionary axis, rather than intellectuals engaged in never-ending arguments.

From this perspective, rather than being the programme of an organisation that wanted to become a party, the *Manifesto* is a document that includes the critique of many so-called socialist and/or communist formations and clarifying the ultimate aim of the proletariat. His speeches, writings and leaflets from this period show that Engels was a revolutionary with a class consciousness with clearly stated aims.

Marx and Engels not only provided a theoretical critique of all previous forms of socialism; they also worked at every capacity within the organisations of the class to remove all outdated forms of thought and politics from within its ranks.

The Relationship between organised struggle and theory

Anti-Dühring

In the preface to ‘*Anti Dühring*’, which Lenin labelled the “*encyclopaedia*” of scientific communism and one of Engels’ greatest works, Engels said:

“The following work is by no means the fruit of any 'inner urge'. On the contrary... Herr Dühring, as an adept and at the same time a reformer of socialism, suddenly issued his challenge to his age, friends in Germany repeatedly urged on me their desire that I should subject this new socialist theory to a critical examination in the central organ of the Social Democratic Party, at that time the *Volksstaat*... The new socialist theory was presented as the ultimate practical fruit of a new philosophical system. It was therefore necessary to examine it in the context of this system, and in doing so to examine the system itself... There were, besides, people who were already preparing to spread this doctrine in a popularised form among the workers.”³

Dühring's ideas, besides causing confusion among some of the intellectuals in the party and his attempts to spread them among the working class, led Engels to leave most of his work aside and focus on this issue. *Anti-Dühring*, like all of Marx's and Engels' other works, was borne out of the needs of the class struggle.

E. Dühring came to the fore with his “*original ideas*” at a time when the struggle of the German workers' movement and the German Party was gathering speed. The fact that he came to the fore at such a time justified him being taken seriously and criticised by Marxists. The *Manifesto* aimed to awaken the consciousness necessary for the establishment and development of a party of the proletariat; *Anti-Dühring* on the other hand surfaced at a time when social democracy had reached a certain level, aiming to change its theoretical foundations, where there was a special need to completely shed all influence of Lasallian approaches. Hence, when compared to the *Manifesto*; *Anti-Dühring* is a step taken towards establishing a worldwide party, it was a tool to express and clarify the whole theory.

Anti-Dühring had also taken over the role of politically and ideologically solidifying the organisational union established in the Gotha Congress of 1875. As Engels stated, the united party of the workers quickly became powerful and the struggle against theoretical and ideological uncertainties that could threaten the newly formed unity became more important. *Anti-Dühring* really did contribute greatly to enhanced awareness among party members of the

³Engels, *Anti-Dühring*

historical mission of the working class and protecting the revolutionary character of the party.

Dialectics of Nature

A collection of Engels' notes under the title of *Dialectics of Nature* included the results of the advances in natural sciences during Engels' own time, as well as his work to combine these with certain concepts of historical materialism in an attempt to "*find dialectics in nature*".

From the mid-19th century, there were new discoveries in mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology, new concepts were formulated, new theories and hypotheses developed, and new branches of science arose. Engels also believed that the disparity between the dialectical nature of scientific advances and the metaphysical methods used by the scientists was a problem that needed to be resolved. Hence, in *Dialectics of Nature*, he attempted to analyse a large collection of new scientific knowledge and generalise the results dialectically; *Dialectics of Nature* was envisaged as a study that served as a guide to dialectical practice of the sciences and for scientists.

In his letter to Engels of 22 June 1867, while working on *Capital*, Marx said "[...] you will see from the conclusion to my Chapter III, where I outline the transformation of the master of a trade into a capitalist — as a result of purely quantitative changes — that in the text there I quote Hegel's discovery of the law of the transformation of a merely quantitative change into a qualitative one as being attested by history and natural science alike."

They agreed and Engels continued in his attempts to formulate a basis for an ontology that enabled the unification of different areas of the material world. The three main areas of nature, society and human thought were seen as a collective that can be explained through common principles; generic laws that govern all of them would be reached. These were the laws of dialectics.

In the preface to the second edition of *Anti-Dühring* Engels said: "Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics from German idealist philosophy and apply it in the materialist conception of nature and history. But a knowledge of mathematics and natural science is essential to a conception of nature which is dialectical and at the same time materialist."

One noteworthy property of the book is the introduction of clarity and solutions to many scientific problems of the time through the use of the dialectical method. Through his superior method and his logical foresight, Engels foretold many developments and managed to find abstract and generic solutions to many questions yet unresolved by the science of his day. Here are some examples:

- In contrast to many scientists of his time, Engels defended the complexity of the atom. “...atoms should never be accepted as simple or generally the smallest known particles of matter”. The current theory on the structure of matter confirms Engels’ views on the interminable and complex nature of the atom, which foretold the existence of subatomic particles. Modern fundamental particle theory has proven Engels’ – and later Lenin’s – thesis on the interminability of the atom and the electron.
- While investigating matter as the unity of push and pull, Engels showed that matter cannot be a static mass, and this has been proven by subsequent discoveries.
- Max Planck, Niels Bohr and Louis de Broglie’s discoveries scientifically confirmed matter as a continuum and the unity of opposites.
- Einstein’s theory of relativity has shown the material equivalent of Engels’ philosophical thesis on matter, movement, time and space.
- Cybernetics and many other new sciences, such as physical chemistry, biochemistry, geophysics, space biology, etc. confirmed Engels’ hypothesis that the combining of different branches of science will lead to great advances.

Engels wrote much of the key content in *Dialectics of Nature* between 1873 and 1886. Unfortunately, due to the work undertaken for *Anti-Dühring*, this study was limited to a collection of data and discussions with various scientists; he only managed to complete a few chapters and the “*Introduction*”. With the death of Marx, he devoted himself to the publication of *Capital* and his own role in the international workers’ movement. Because he could not carry out any scientific work, he could not continue working on *Dialectics of Nature* and the chapters he completed could not be published during his lifetime. The full text of *Dialectics of Nature* was first published in the USSR in 1925. Lenin, in his work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* used the same method and reached the same results on

many key issues as Engels, unaware of his work and the thesis he developed.

The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State

Seen by Lenin as “one of the fundamental works of modern socialism”, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* was written in 1884. In this book, on the one hand Engels explained from a materialist perspective the early history of humanity, the reasons for the formation of opposing classes and the rise of the state as a tool of class rule; on the other hand he showed that the bourgeois democratic republic is a form of capitalist class rule. This was important in terms of exposing the link between the discussions on parliamentarism and republicanism, popular among social democrats of the day, and the bourgeois state. In the political arena, this was the first work in which the Marxist stance against opportunist elements spreading parliamentarist and reformist illusions was clarified on its historical basis.

Furthermore, this was the first work where family, marriage and consequently women’s position in different social structures was investigated. Engels proved that prior to the formation of classes woman had an equal position in society, that she lost this position with the rise of private ownership of the means of production and that woman’s unequal position was created by the economic relationships based on exploitation. Engels also established that family, just as all other social structures, is changed and transformed due to economic life and the relations of ownership and is in a state of capitalist disintegration. These fundamental theses made a major contribution to the ideological development of the socialist women’s movement.

This work also played an important role in the spread of scientific socialism in the area of social criticism.

Works On the Theory of the State

As the issue of the state continued to be contentious – and with the added impact of anarchism – Engels primarily focused on the proletarian revolution and its tactics, the proletarian dictatorship and the development of alliances under the proletarian revolution within the concept of state theory.

Engels took an uncompromising stance against the perception that the state is a power above classes and a tool to be used in evolu-

ing capitalism further towards socialism as time goes on. He demonstrated that the bourgeois democratic republic of the USA, at the time, which also influenced many social democrats, was nothing but a form of bourgeois dictatorship that represented the “*exploitation of one class by another*”.⁴

But he also drew attention to the fact that the democratic republic is the most advantageous form of state under conditions of bourgeois dictatorship. Like Marx he saw the democratic republic as “*the field of war where the determining battle between bourgeoisie and the proletariat will be fought*”.⁵ Therefore, he criticised the lack of clarity, within the framework of the Erfurt programme, in demands for bringing down the system of the semi-monarchy by democratic republicans.

These criticisms were aimed at reformists as much as anarchists. Engels fought with consistency against the adventurist attempts to achieve revolution in a way that was disengaged from the movement of the masses:

*“The time of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small conscious minorities at the head of masses lacking consciousness is past. Where it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organisation, the masses themselves must also be in on it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are fighting for, body and soul.”*⁶

Works on the Gotha and Erfurt Programmes

The plan to unite Lassalle’s supporters and the Marxists in Germany, drawn up in 1875 in Gotha, was full of concessions to Lassalle’s supporters and was very pro-Lassalle. It was harshly criticised by Marx; this criticism addressed many of the gaps and misunderstandings in the thesis of the Marxists. Engels criticised this programme in a long letter he wrote to Bebel. The programme was accepted at the congress, without sharing the criticism by Marx

⁴ Friedrich Engels; *Einleitung zu Marx’ “Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich 1848-1850”* [Introduction to Marx’s “Civil War in France”]. Marx Engels Work (MEW), Vol. 22

⁵ *From Engels to Bebel*. 18 August 1886. MEW, Vol. 36

⁶ Friedrich Engels; *Einleitung zu Marx’ “Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich 1848-1850”*, [Introduction to Marx’s “Class Struggles in France 1848-1850”]. Marx Engels Work (MEW), Vol. 22

and Engels with the delegates. Engels got the criticism, which stayed hidden for a long time, published in 1891 under the title of *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*, and the criticism led to the new programme accepted in Erfurt in October 1891. In his criticism, Marx used the concept of proletarian dictatorship while explaining how the transition from capitalism to socialism will happen.

Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy

Engels finished his work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* in 1866. Lenin deemed this work “as important as the Communist Manifesto”. The reason was the political importance of settling the score with idealist philosophy, which was resurging in Germany and influencing social democrat intellectuals within the party, establishing an ideological basis that fostered opportunism.

The third chapter, titled “*Religious philosophy and ethics of Feuerbach*”, lays out the core of the Marxist criticism of Feuerbach’s ideas. In criticising the last big master of old materialism, Feuerbach’s concept of social relations based on religion, love, etc. Engels used the concept of “*abstract human*”, exposing Feuerbach’s attempts to create a new religion in the name of materialism. This contributed hugely to the education of revolutionaries with a spirit of materialist philosophy.

The Peasant Question

Engels saw the winning of the non-proletarian sections of the working class, especially the peasant labourers, to the proletarian cause as a necessary condition for the victory of the revolution. Especially in France where the peasant population was really big, he said that “*unless the masses are won over, a victory is not possible*”.⁷ The widespread underestimation of this issue within the socialist movement and the mistakes by some opportunist party members in dealing with the issues of the peasantry and land compelled Engels to work on this issue. One of his most important works towards this end was *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*.

⁷ Friedrich Engels; *Einleitung zu Marx’ “Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich 1848-1850”* op. cit.

Engels also condemned the opportunist attempts to create an alliance with the whole peasantry, including the rich peasants who exploited waged labour.

The Struggle against Anarchism in the First International

The statement by representatives of anarchism after the Paris Commune that they would not recognise the decisions taken by the General Assembly of the International and calling on all workers and unions to oppose these decisions led to great damage among the ranks of the class; pro-Blanqui and pro-Lassalle influence increased in major sections of the International. Engels wrote to the organisations in Italy, Spain and Belgium, areas under his responsibility, criticising Blanquism and defending the decisions of the General Assembly. He declared that the experience of the Commune condemned anarchism and that a proletarian dictatorship and proletarian party is a necessity.

In the Conference a decision on the principal of “*The political effectiveness of the working class*” was taken, mostly written with the contributions of Engels. In that decision “*the construction by the working class of a political party is necessary for revolution and its ultimate aims*”.

The Congress in Lahey accepted that the proletarian dictatorship is the precursor to the socialist revolution and that this can only be achieved and secured under the leadership of the parties of the proletariat; Engels’ formulation was included in the constitution in



the London Conference. The joint ideological, political and organisational principles of the workers' movement around the International Workers' Union had ended with the victory of scientific communism in Lahey. The conditions for the configuration of socialist parties in different countries were created.

On the Housing Question

During his fight in the ranks of the Eisenach Party against Prussian ideology, Lassallism and vulgar democratism, Engels made his first full analysis of Bismarckean Bonapartism. Rejecting the claims that the state established by Bismarck was above classes and it could defend the rights of all classes and strata, Engels argued that this state "*is pseudo-constitutionalism*" where "*the real governing power lies in the hands of a special caste of army officers and state officials*" consisting mainly of Junkers and a small section of the bourgeoisie.

Engels' extraordinary talent in combining the actual problems of the class struggle with the interpretation of the principles of Scientific Communism was demonstrated once again in his series of articles "*On the Housing Question*" published in *Volksstaat*. The housing problem of the working class had reached disastrous levels in the early 1870s as a result of the unequal development of industry and of the concentration of the proletariat in industrial centres. Social reformists had begun to carry out propaganda of their various projects regarding the solution of the housing question and the "*workers' question*" in general. However, all these projects avoided touching on capitalist ownership and the bourgeois social order.

Engels demonstrated the fact that all sorts of one-sided emphases and the absolutizing of various social measures only led to the concealment of exploitation. His analysis concluded that "*the revolutionary class policy of the proletariat cannot not be replaced by a policy of reforms*", because "*it is not that the solution of the housing question simultaneously solves the social question, but that only by the solution of the social question, that is, by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, is the solution of the housing question made possible*".

The eastern question

Following his series of articles on "*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*", Engels began to work on the Eastern

Question in the face of sharpening contradictions in the Near East. After a short break, in autumn 1853, also at Marx's request, he commenced his studies on this subject which would continue during the Crimean War (1853-56) between Russia and Turkey (the Ottoman Empire). The Eastern Question was a complicated web of contradictions consisting of a war between big powers for the redivision of the Ottoman Empire. This empire was a feudal state engulfed in an internal depression, accompanied by the development of national liberation wars of the peoples of the Balkans, which was under Ottoman hegemony. This subject interested them because of the question of how the position of England, especially in the war between Russia and Turkey and the relations between reactionary despotic states, would affect the workers' movement in Europe.

These articles are very valuable in terms of establishing the class criteria, which are still valid today, with regard to the contradictions between big powers and the working class struggle as well as the national question.

Lessons of the Crimean War

During the first few months of the war, Engels' many articles, such as "*Position of the Armies in Turkey*", "*The Holy War*", "*The Turkish War*" and "*The War on the Danube*", were published in November-December 1853 in the *New York Daily Tribune*.

These articles demonstrated Engels' extensive knowledge of military science and analysed the implications of the problems caused by the relations between big powers for the class struggle. They presented unique examples of events that unravelled the complicated web of relations and contradictions in a simplified way, drawing attention to the most essential points, as well as establishing some theoretical generalisations on the class character of the war, the economic causes of the war, its visible consequences and complicated nature.

Engels also devoted a large place to the military system in his scientific analysis. He considered the knowledge of the art of war as a necessary element for the preparation of the proletarian party for the wars to be waged in the near future against reactionary forces.

War and Peace

Engels saw that a world war could shake the ruling classes, but that it would also impede the victory of the workers' movement by

reviving nationalism and chauvinism. From this, he came to the conclusion that for the progress of socialist movement of the workers and peoples in general, they needed peace because the organized revolutionary proletariat could prepare itself most effectively for the struggle to seize power under peaceful conditions. Therefore, the fight for peace became inseparable from the struggle for socialism.

However, this approach was not for "*peace at any price*", which might imply subordination of a people to a conqueror, and Engels' defence of peace had nothing to do with bourgeois pacifism. Just like the fight for democracy, he considered the fight to preserve peace as something that depended on the fight for socialism, because only in a socialist world can democracy and peace be definitely and constantly safeguarded.

War and revolution

Engels dealt many times with the relation between the revolutionary workers' movement and war and peace. "*...war offers it (the proletariat) either victory in two or three years, or complete ruin, at least for the next fifteen to twenty years. In this position the German socialists would have to be mad to prefer the all-or-nothing of war to the certain victory which peace offers them.*"

No socialist, of whatever country, can desire victory by war, either by the German or the French government, even less by the Tsar. "*That is why socialists everywhere demand that peace be maintained. But if war is to break out nonetheless, one thing is certain:... this war would either lead to the immediate triumph of socialism, or it would lead to such an upheaval in the old order of things, it would leave behind it everywhere such a heap of ruins, that the old capitalist society would become more impossible than ever, and the social revolution, set back by ten or fifteen years, would only be all the more radical and more rapidly implemented.*"⁸

Against Colonialism and National Oppression

Writings on China and India

From the second half of the 1850s, Engels extensively wrote to expose the colonialist expansion of the leading capitalist powers,

⁸ Friedrich Engels: *Socialism in Germany*. MEW, vol. 22

and about the national liberation wars of the peoples of Asia and Africa against the colonialists.

Marx and Engels carefully followed the national movements of the peoples of China and India, which widened in the 1850s; they considered these movements to be a force with the capacity to shake the economic basis of the prosperity of bourgeois society and hasten the victory of the social revolution. They harshly criticized the colonialist policy of the English government and the tyrannical treatment of the peoples of the enslaved countries by the English military clique.

In his many articles ("*A New English Expedition to China*", "*Iran-China*", "*Russia's Successes in the Far East*", etc.) Engels exposed the plundering character of the annexationist policy of the English bourgeoisie in China and foresaw that this policy would meet with the resistance of its people.

The national liberation war of the people of India was also greeted with great sympathy by the founders of Marxism. Marx and Engels felt close to the 1857-59 Indian National Rebellion, and criticized the English colonialists. Throughout 1858 Engels wrote many articles on the progress of the conflict, in which he also analysed the failure of the rebellion.

Expounding on the situation in India following the suppression of the revolt, Engels said that "*this second conquest has not increased England's hold upon the mind of the Indian people*", that, on the contrary, their hatred was "*more fierce than ever*", and he foresaw the serious consequences that would occur in terms of English hegemony.

Engels' writings, together with those of Marx, on the national liberation wars of the peoples of Asia and North Africa, laid the foundations for the development of the Marxist viewpoint on the colonial question.

After Marx's death

In 1883, having lost his close friend and comrade in struggle of forty years, Engels had to carry on with the work undertaken by Marx in his lifetime. In his final years, his main preoccupation was to assist the international workers' movement in its theoretical and organisational problems, to complete Marx's unfinished theoretical works, and to develop Marxist theory even further.

The Second International

From the mid-1880s on, the number of national workers parties increased and the demand for a sound international association of workers' organisations grew stronger. These expectations had an objective basis because in many European countries independent proletarian organisations had been created, though with varying levels of theoretical and political maturity. Having approached cautiously the insistence of his friends on the commencement of preparations for the formation of a new International in previous years, Engels was of the idea that a formal International can "*no longer be a propaganda association but simply an association for action*".

Towards the end of the 1880s the situation changed. In all capitalist countries, the rise of the workers' movement began and this was manifested in numerous strikes, some of which had a mass character.

In order for a new international organisation to be based on Marxist foundations from the start, Engels warned that the International Congress must be prepared with great care, as its failure would strengthen the position of the reformists who were also trying to form an international organisation. Therefore he had no option but to take part in the preparatory work for the "*damned Congress*", which he complained needed "*a lot of writing, running about*" that prevented him from concentrating on his work on the third volume of *Capital*.

Engels reminded those in agreement with him of the experience that the future interests of the working class – socialism – through decades-long violent wars of the workers' movement should not be sacrificed for any momentary interest.

Of course, one should also fight for reforms in capitalist society; however, Engels taught the proletariat to consider reforms not just as an instrument to improve their living conditions but also as something that could improve their conditions of struggle and as an opportunity to bring the masses closer to the revolution.

The International Congress in Paris was very successful in terms of its results for the revolutionary International of the workers' movement was mostly due to Engels' months-long assistance. The slogans that were raised in the hall, "*Workers of the world, unite!*" and "*For the political and economic expropriation of the*

capitalist class, for socialization of the means of production!" were the goals of the proletariat that Marx and Engels had formulated.

Differing from the First International, from the start this new International was raised on the foundations of the teachings of Marx and Engels in all its important aspects. The task of the First International was to merge the workers' movement with Marxism and pave the way for the formation of national working class parties, whereas the task of the Second International was to prepare the international working class for the proletarian revolution, just as Engels had envisaged. This was a historical task, but 25 years after its formation it was betrayed by the majority of its leaders.

Determining interpretations on the base and the superstructure

While Marx was still alive, there emerged mechanical-determinist understandings among some groups claiming to be "*Marxist*", due to wrong and insufficient interpretations of the theory. In his letter to Conrad Schmidt dated 5 August 1890, Engels quoted Marx, who said "*All I know is that I am not a Marxist*" in the face of such mistakes. Marx and Engels rejected those who overlooked the principal of reciprocal influence because of the premise that the "*economic base is the main determinant*".

Engels wrote to C. Schmidt, J. Bloch, F. Mehring and W. Borgius on this subject quite a few times, reaffirming that the materialist understanding of history is a dialectical theory, harshly criticizing those mistaken viewpoints, thus freeing us from a heavy burden. "*Our historical method... is not an instrument of interpretation but a study guide,*" he stated.

In his letter to Bloch dated 21 September 1890, Engels wrote the following:

"According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Other than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure — political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic,

philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas — also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree."

In another letter he wrote to C. Schmidt, dated 27 October 1890, Engels gave an important example to point out the consequences of a mistaken understanding of the determinant character of the economy: "*Or why do we fight for the political dictatorship of the proletariat if political power is economically impotent? Force (that is state power) is also an economic power."*

These statements provide a strong refutation of the accusations by the present bourgeois critics who distort Marxism, claiming that it amounts to a linear understanding of history.

Work on the second and third volumes of *Capital*

Engels wrote a comprehensive foreword to the second volume of "*Capital*". Explaining which of Marx's manuscripts he drew upon and the editing principles he espoused, he assessed the reception of "*Capital*" in the 18 years since its publication. Confronting those who falsified Marx's theory, he vehemently defended his comrade's honour and demonstrated that Marx had not plagiarised his theory of surplus value from anywhere since no scientific theory of surplus value existed previously.

Engels reported that Marx resolved this complex scientific question on the face of which the Ricardo school of classical bourgeois economy had failed in the third volume of his work. Engels wrote the following optimistically to Bebel: "*The work on the third book continues. It is extremely magnificent. The upheaval of old economy is really unbelievable. Our theory gains an unshakable basis only with this and enables us to take victorious stance against all sides.*"⁹

⁹ Engels to Friedrich Adolf Sorge, 3 June 1885, MEW, Vol. 36

The material left behind for the third volume was much more complicated than that of the second volume. The fragmented nature of the manuscripts caused Engels to spend an extraordinary amount of time and effort to complete the work. While Engels' insertions amounted to ten books in the second volume, there were many times more in the third volume; for instance, Engels had to rewrite some sections such as the fourth chapter on "*The Effect of the Turn-over on the Rate of Profit*".

Engels predicted that the third volume would have a great impact on the international workers' movement. He wrote in a letter to Sorge: "*The second volume must be digested first. [...] with little in the way of agitation. By contrast the third volume will again have the effect of a thunderbolt, since the whole of capitalist production is dealt with in context for the first time and all official bourgeois economics rejected out of hand.*"¹⁰

In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx presented his task as to "*locate and describe the concrete forms which grow out of the movements of capital as a whole.*" While he demonstrated how surplus value was forcibly obtained from the working class in the first volume and the conditions it was subject to in the circulation process in the second volume, in the third volume he showed the way a violent fight had erupted between various factions of the capitalist class and landowning class appear now as profit, enterprise profit, interest and land rent for the appropriation of the spoils.

Predictions concerning monopoly capitalism

Debates about different monopolies – of property, power and trade – had begun in the economic and socialist press as early as the 1840s. Bourgeois economists, despite the evils of competition, were laying praise on monopolisation as the cure-all.

As for Engels, he regarded competition, which arises out of the content of capitalist private property, as the first category characterising the entire phenomena of social life and total bourgeois order. In competition, the merciless supremacy of the powerful was in action. However, just as competition creates monopoly, monopoly also creates competition and moreover, causes it to become acute. For competition to be done away with in earnest, the supremacy of private property has to be eradicated. Engels emphasized that the

¹⁰ *ibid.*

robbery had only changed form and that it remained the same in essence.

In this respect, in *Anti-Dühring* Engels once again drew attention to monopoly in capitalist economy and even to the tendency toward monopoly capitalism, a question which Marx could not have examined a decade earlier in the first volume of *Capital*: the concentration of production and capital was forcing the capitalists to merge into “*various joint-stock companies*”; nonetheless, “*At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient: the official representative of capitalist society – the state – will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production*”.

While working on the third volume of *Capital*, Engels witnessed the complete confirmation of Marx’s predictions about the development of capitalism with new facts of the 1880s and 1890s. In one of the additions he made, he noted that “*the old boasted freedom of competition has reached the end of its tether and must itself announce its obvious, scandalous bankruptcy. And in every country this is taking place through the big industrialists of a certain branch joining in a cartel for the regulation of production. [...] Occasionally even international cartels were established [...]. But even this form of association in production did not suffice. [...] This led in some branches, where the scale of production permitted, to the concentration of the entire production of that branch of industry in one big joint-stock company under single management. [...] Thus, [...] competition has been replaced by monopoly [...] and the road has been paved, most gratifyingly, for future expropriation by the whole of society, the nation.*”¹¹

Lenin extremely valued Engel’s “*observations of the changes in modern capitalism and to this extent, his recognition of undertaking the tasks of the imperialist epoch before its time*” until the final years of his life. Despite living under pre-monopoly capitalism, Engels carefully followed the process of concentration of production and centralisation of capital rapidly taking place particularly after the economic crisis of 1873. With such faultless examination of facts and the application of the laws of capitalist motion, he was able to identify from the beginning that monopoly and ultimately state monopoly would be determining for the stage of termination of capitalism. This was a magnificent foresight.

¹¹ Karl Marx: *Capital*. Vol. 3, MEW, Vol. 25

Until his last breath

At the end of April 1883, Engels had resolved to stay permanently in London. He reported his decision and plans to August Bebel: “*up to my eyes in my own work and with the prospect of a year's work on the second volume of Capital and another year's work on Marx's biography, along with the history of the German socialist movement from 1843 to 1863 and of the International from 1864-72, it would be madness for me to exchange my peaceful retreat here for some place where one would, have to take part in meetings and newspaper battles... To be sure, if things were as they were in 1848 and 1849, I would again take to the saddle if need arose. But now — strict division of labour... You have only to think of the enormous correspondence, formerly shared out between Marx and myself, which I have had to conduct on my own for over a year now.*”

In the face of such comprehensive tasks, Engels had to defer his scientific work and plans, primarily with the *Dialectics of Nature*.

Due to his comprehensive correspondence and one-to-one debates in the socialist press and with many recognised socialist personalities, Engels had in his possession the daily knowledge of all the important developments of the working class struggle for emancipation. He provided invaluable help to socialist cadres in forming the correct tactical line and played an active role in enabling and strengthening the communication between them.

At the start of 1895, Engels' state of health deteriorated. In the spring his doctor diagnosed him with throat cancer. Despite the increasing physical hardship he endured, Engels continued to carefully follow the working class struggle for emancipation until the last day of his life. Four months before his death, he was working on supplements for the third volume of *Capital*.

Until July 1895 Engels continued to correspond with the leaders of socialist movements of various countries and read the new works of socialist literature. Even a few days before his death, when his illness had restricted even his ability to speak, Engels listened to what Eleanor Marx-Aveling had to say about the state of the Independent Labour Party with lively interest.

On 5 August 1895 he bade farewell to life.

His entire life was spent in the struggle for the proletariat to organise and become conscious and to establish its own class power.

Perhaps his most important testament is his words on struggling with the party and by learning from the working class. He gave the following advice to the party intellectuals: *“May they come to realise that their ‘academic education’... does not provide them with an officer’s commission and a claim to a corresponding post in the party; that in our party everybody must work his way up; that positions of trust in the party are not won simply through literary talent and theoretical knowledge,... but that this also demands familiarity with the conditions of party struggle and adjustment to its forms, proven personal reliability and constancy of character and, finally, a willingness to join the rank of fighters –in short, that they, the ‘academically educated’ all in all have much more to learn from the workers than the workers from them.”*¹²

September 2020

¹² Friedrich Engels: Reply to the Editors of the "Sächsische Arbeiter Zeitung", *MEW*, Vol. 22

What Was and Is the Cuban Process

In his famous 1967 speech before the Tricontinental, Ernesto “Che” Guevara said with good reason that in our epoch, the epoch of the highest stage of capitalism and of proletarian revolutions, the national bourgeoisies could no longer be trusted because they had abandoned all their opposition to imperialism, posing the situation in the following manner: "either socialist revolution or the caricature of a revolution."

At that point in the party, there was no honest Marxist-Leninist who did not know that Guevara's proposal was a shot in his own foot, since Castro's Cuba had already abandoned any revolutionary perspective in exchange for rubles, it was the caricature of “socialism” by which social-imperialism attracted new satellites from the struggles for National Liberation; it was definitely this caricature of the revolution that Guevara was curiously trying to warn a public made up of petty-bourgeois organizations.

In the framework of the necessary struggle that we must develop against ideas alien to Marxism-Leninism, it is necessary to shed light on different key aspects when characterizing the Cuban process and thus avoid the flow of anti-Marxist ideas and erroneous notions about the building of Socialism that produces a following for Castroism.

It is important to address the issue of the Cuban revolution because we understand that although it was a stimulus for several generations of militants, many weaknesses can be seen in regard to the practice not only of socialist construction but also of what it does to the proletarian internationalism, how to seize Power and the role of a vanguard State when it comes to confronting opportunism.

It is impossible for us not to see the main Cuban leaders embraced by the greatest exponents of revisionism: Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Tito, Nasser, Chavez among others, whom they not only did not fight, but also promoted as irreplaceable allies. While on the other hand, they fought the need for objective and subjective analysis of reality when considering the seizure of power, wreaking havoc on the contemporary revolutionary ranks; the sending of troops armed with social-imperialist rifles and more recently the support

for populism and the alliances of the left with the bourgeoisie. All these ideas that Castroism spread in the Latin American left and that today seem very distant we continue to face on a daily basis and they, together with postmodernism, are one of the main ideological challenges to be fought by our Party.

But let us start from the beginning.

The July 26th Movement, its objectives before taking power

The Cuban revolutionaries never declared themselves communists, Marxist-Leninists, at least until the USSR demanded it. Far from it, the July 26th Movement was made up of former members of the bourgeois parties consolidated in Cuban society at the time, the Orthodox Party and the Revolutionary Party, parties of a nationalist, bourgeois-democratic nature, which they summed up as anti-imperialism. Their social composition was strongly marked by the petty bourgeoisie; intellectuals, professionals and even children of the middle bourgeois related to imperialism, as in the case of Castro himself.

The main objective, if not the only one they had proposed, was the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship as a starting point for a greater capitalist development of the national economy that had been widely based on the extraction of raw materials and in the hands of U.S. monopolies. Then, as a result of the need to attract the peasantry, they added the need for agrarian reform.

An example of this would be the *Manifiesto de la Sierra Maestra*, published in July 1957 where a call was made to unite all the forces that were against the dictatorship, for a "democratic and constitutional orientation" in which they spoke of issues such as the holding of free elections, respect for the pre-existing republicanism on the island and its Constitution.

Where Castro most explicitly showed the bourgeois and anti-proletarian character of his program was in the article "Why we fight" that he wrote for the magazine *Coronet* published in February 1958. Due to space constraints, we cannot reprint here everything we would like to about this note. In summary, in this article, the Cuban leader highlighted the strategy of the July 26th Movement in the period: overthrow of Batista; formation of a provisional government which would be appointed by delegations made up of members of "civil society," of which it mentions 1) religious associ-

ations, 2) professional organizations, 3) Rotarians¹, Lions, etc.; and the call for elections for a government that respects the 1943 constitution. The first thing that catches one's eyes and is obvious is that at the time of forming the government, neither workers nor peasant organizations are mentioned, while the respect for the Constitution makes it clear that the supreme interest was to return to the natural course of bourgeois legality, but without Batista. There was no talk, either of a people's democracy or of a Constituent Assembly, much less of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of course.

The program that the July 26th Movement defended was detailed by Castro in this article in which he raised seven essential points: 1) political amnesty; 2) freedom of the press; 3) restoration of individual liberties; 4) end of corruption (he proposed for this to increase the salary of officials); 5) campaign against illiteracy; 6) agrarian reform based on the resolution of the legal property²; 7) development of light industry as the engine for job creation.

If anyone believes that transformation of the property system could result from this program, Castro did not hesitate to defend foreign investment and ensure the conditions to maintain the exploitation already in progress as long as it did not contradict this program; due to that, according to him, the State would finance its infrastructure works based on better tax collection achieved through the direct collection of taxes and the fight against corruption. Therefore, private investment would be the engine of the new Cuba dreamed of by Castro; he made this clear as follows:

“...any attempt at total nationalization would obviously hamper the main point of our economic platform: industrialization at the

¹ “Rotary International is an international organization and service club whose purpose is to bring together business and professional leaders in order provide humanitarian services in their communities, to raise the ethical norms in all occupations and to advance good will and peace around the world.” (Rotary Basic Library, Volume 1. What is Rotary?)

² “Hundreds of thousands of small farmers occupy parcels which they do not own under the law. Thousands of absentee owners claim title to properties they've hardly ever seen. The titles, in fact, have been seen by no one and it is often impossible to establish who actually owns a particular property.... We will support no land reform bill, however, which does not provide for the just compensation of expropriated owners.”

fastest possible rate. For this, foreign investments will always be welcome and safe here.

If anyone continues to think after all of the above that Castro was trying to divert attention from his secret socialist aims, we will end the paragraph with the synthesis of the whole matter, why the July 26th Movement was fighting:

“Industrialization is at the heart of our economic progress. Something must be done about the staggering number of more than a million unemployed who cannot find work for eight out of every twelve months. They can expect to work only for the four months of the cane harvest. One million unemployed in a nation of six million shows a terrible economic disease that must be cured without delay, lest it rot and become a breeding ground for communism.”

Batista fell, the revolution began

After several definitive blows to the army of the Cuban dictatorship, on January 1, 1959, the Cuban revolutionaries took Havana on what is considered day one of the victorious revolution.

We must give some details about the pre-revolution stage. As one of the last Spanish colonies in the Americas, the history of Cuba as a Republic is strongly linked to the United States. This meant at first the immediate invasion by the U.S. army after independence from Spain and a later relative independence, because, although in 1902 the Republic of Cuba was declared an independent State, this only remained on paper due to the absolute control of the Cuban economy by the U.S. monopolies, which used the island for plantations and the export of raw materials, mainly sugar and coffee, while placing their second order commodities there. In fact, this made Cuba a semi-colony of the U.S. imperialists. Democracy was not one of the strengths of the Caribbean country, which in 1933 experienced the first coup d'état perpetrated by Fulgencio Batista, who governed except for brief interruptions until 1959.

Before the seizure of power, Cuba had an extremely authoritarian government that ruled on the basis of terror, which suppressed democratic freedoms and kept the economy in a deep state of crisis, due in large part to its non-diversity of production and modernization, making it highly dependent on weather conditions and the will of the Yankee monopolists.

All this led to constant demonstrations and strikes by the working class and other popular sectors, which, as expected, caused de-

moralization in the ranks of the Batista government and his army. In addition, a mobilized people led to the discontent of the U.S. boss, and whoever did not have the approval of the boss fell³.

The raising of the victory against the dying Batista dictatorship to the level of an epic product of great achievements from the military point of view and with regard to the role of the masses in the revolution, led to the underestimation of a correct assessment of the objective and subjective aspects, inventing new general laws for the seizure of power. This led to a wave of guerrilla warfare throughout the continent that resulted in the death of thousands of popular fighters, a lesson that we belatedly learned. Today no one in their right mind raises the development of the guerrilla in the Castroist way; these facts help us to expose the myth of the guerrilla foco as the only valid method of carrying out the armed struggle for the seizure of power, or the myth of a handful of men who defeated a mighty regular army.

We must emphasize the fulfillment in the Cuban case of the Marxist-Leninist thesis that the seizure of power is impossible without the undermining and division of the bourgeois state army, without the organized insurrection of workers' detachments in the main cities and, of course, without the objective and subjective conditions for the revolution being fulfilled. Many people forget that before the victory there were various uprisings that ended in resounding failure and that the cornerstone in the development of the guerrilla units was patient work in the countryside and in the city. The days of the Batista government were numbered and the pro-Yankee Cuban bourgeoisie could not continue to govern for long using the same methods; nor could the Cuban people continue to suffer hunger and misery. On the other hand, the lack of a defined bourgeois opposition and the weak development of bourgeois democracy in Cuba

3 To understand this, Guevara's point of view is important, as he bluntly admitted that the fall of Batista was eminent: "The monopolies, as is habitual in such cases, began to think of a successor for Batista precisely because they knew that the people were opposed to him and were looking for a revolutionary solution. What more intelligent and expert stroke than to depose the now unserviceable little dictator and replace him with the new 'boys' who would in turn serve the interests of imperialism?" (Guevara, *Cuba: Historical exception or vanguard in the anti-colonial struggle?* (1962))

were decisive in making possible the victory of the July 26th Movement.

After the seizure of the state apparatus, the new Cuban rulers followed a different path from that of the most exemplary proletarian revolutions, such as those of the Soviet Union and Albania. These defined their course in the first days with concrete economic and political decisions in order to strengthen the revolution; in the Cuban case the revolutionary measures were delayed. For example, the Agrarian Reform – quite conservative in appearance – was drawn up only in May, while the nationalization of the national private industry took place gradually between 1967 and 1970 as a continuation of the first nationalizations of the main U.S. companies that began in late May of 1960, basing itself on the old Constitution and in strong compensation for the capitalists.

Before this, Castro had already made a tour of the United States offering to continue relations of dependency, but with a little more control, speaking of the friendship between the two countries. He even reached the point of proposing the participation of the Cuban State in imperialist interventions, and emphasized that his revolution did not intend to interfere with the bourgeoisie but to improve the distribution of wealth.

At this level, the United States welcomed the fall of Batista and the seizure of power by the July 26th Movement. In the first days it reported:

"The sincere goodwill of the government and people of the United States in relation to the new government and the people of Cuba" (US Department of State. Bulletin volume 440, No. 1022 January 26, 1959).

Subsequently, seeing that the "good" investments of the United States to industrialize Cuba and better exploit tourism did not happen, the Cuban government was forced to seek alternatives, especially the purchase of oil at more favorable prices, since the United States sold it to them above the market value.

The search for independence by its old semi-colony did not please the U.S. imperialists, who were not willing to accept the development of a national bourgeoisie against their interests. They would not allow the implementation of measures such as the nationalization of some of the main energy, communications and transport

companies⁴, as well as the fight against large estates, measures that many Latin American governments had already carried out decades ago in relation to England.

This caused a rapid worsening in the contradictions between the two States; on the one hand the United States reduced its quota of sugar purchases and blocked the processing of raw material not coming from its territory in Cuban companies owned by its monopolies⁵, and on the other hand the Cuban State took strong measures – generally nationalization and in rare cases expropriation by force – essential not to stop production completely, which would mean the fall of the new government in a matter of weeks.

Therefore, we can state that Cuba's contradictions with the United States did not arise from a determined confrontation with the Cuban revolutionaries, but rather from the previous backwardness of the island's economic development, its historical dependence on the United States, fundamentally, from one of the aspects of Imperialism as a historical epoch. Only an idealist, a politician with a narrow mentality and ignorant of reality can pretend to lead a national liberation struggle peacefully, without foreseeing the reaction of the imperialist powers that see their interests harmed by losing an area of influence, a market, an easy destination to invest their capital and easily extract dividends.

The above answers the fallacious assertion that Castro was moderate at the beginning so as not to rush the process. In the first place, at no time was the issue of socialism raised in the programs

⁴ The original aim of the July 26th Movement was the development of a “serious” capitalism. One of the first measures that the bourgeois-democratic revolution proposed was the nationalization of the essential services such as electricity. No matter how much compensation they were offered, the Yankees did not want to leave them in Cuban hands, which led to the first confrontations.

⁵ As the US sold oil to Cuba at above-market prices, the government chose to start buying it from Venezuela and the USSR. In response to this, the U.S. owners of the refineries refused to process the crude. Something similar happened in the food industry. This is important since the nationalizations in the industry occurred in response to the obstacles that the United States placed on Cuba as a semi-colonial country and not as a programmatic measure. Either they nationalized or they ran out of energy.

of the July 26th Movement, or any other official Cuban party prior to 1962; nor was there even talk of the working class, which was largely absent from the entire process. The leaders of the Cuban revolution and their documents were always very clear about the objective, which was to defeat Batista and continue with a normal capitalist development, with greater autonomy for the bourgeoisie and a mild development of industry. If anyone dared to doubt this, Castro was in charge in his eternal speeches of openly vomiting anti-communism.

As in other processes that emerged in Africa or Asia during what was called the Cold War, the yearnings for "socialism" would come together with credits, investments, weapons and requests for favors from Soviet social-imperialism.

**The end of national aspirations:
the social-imperialists gain a new satellite**

The visit to Cuba on February 4, 1960, of Anastas Mikoyan, the leader of the Soviet Government and Khrushchev's right-hand man, the tour that Guevara made at the end of that same year through the CMEA [Council of Mutual Economic Assistance] bloc and China in search of credits, and finally, the economic blockade by the United States decreed in February 1962, were the starting points of the turn of the Cuban revolution towards pro-Soviet positions. From this moment on we can say that the stage of rejection of the bourgeois-democratic and anti-imperialist revolution began, which would quickly be summed up in the conversion of Cuba into a highly dependent country at the service of the other imperialist gang of the period.

We must clarify that by the 1960s the Soviet Union had already renounced socialist construction and the dictatorship of the proletariat, becoming a "State of all the people", in which the organizations of People's Power had been eliminated and capitalism made its way through various economic measures that strengthened free enterprise and the market, giving way to capitalist restoration. This and the theses of "socialist distribution" of labor that devastated the industry and the economic sovereignty of the countries of the eastern bloc were some of the elements that already made the USSR a social-imperialist State, socialist in words and imperialist in deeds.

The new dependency of the island

As an example, in the case of Cuba, the acceptance of Soviet credits was accompanied by the obligation to purchase articles from that same State between 11% and 53% above international market prices, and in the case of machinery, it was common to use outdated equipment, from previous generations and of very poor quality.

The integration of the Cuban economy into the "socialist division of labor" and the use by the Cuban leadership of Soviet "aid" resulted in the total abandonment of any project of industrialization of the country and therefore also in absolute dependence of the island with respect to imperialism.

As an expression of brutal dependence, it is enough to point out that in the 1990s more than 80% of foreign trade came from the CMEA countries (Central Bank of Cuba, The Cuban Economy in the Special Period 1990-2000) while sugar represented 75% of its exports. The rest was made up of tobacco, nickel, rum, and fuels that it bought at preferential prices and then resold to other capitalist countries.

Cuban interventionism

One of the darkest issues during this period was the role of the Cuban revisionists as mercenaries of Soviet social-imperialism in the countries that tried to fight for their independence, as well as in



Nikita Khrushchev, Fidel Castro, Leonid Brezhnev and others

the different multilateral organizations in which Cuba participated as ambassador and propagandist for the Soviets.

The presence of the Cuban army in Angola stands out, where between 1975 and 1991 they intervened with 300,000 soldiers and 50,000 civilians, functioning as a true invading army. If the United States exports "democracy" to the world in order to extract resources and exploit the workers of the respective countries with their investments, the Soviet social-imperialists and their mercenaries exported "socialism" for the same purposes. In addition to Angola, Cuba officially sent troops to countries such as Algeria, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, to which should be added campaigns such as those in the Congo where the Cuban "internationalists" defended the government in charge of assassinating Lumumba.

Some may say that the sending of troops and equipment by the social-imperialists and their satellites was a contribution to the independence of the peoples involved. This forces us to insist on the characterization of the Soviet Union in the 1970s, since if we speak of a state dominated by the state bureaucracy and the heads of state companies whose aim was profit, its foreign policy cannot be considered – except in the mind of an idealist – as internationalist aid.

Thus, the Cuban army, which was paid very well for its services, did not fulfill any other task than doing the dirty work that the Soviet revisionists could not do in the framework of the Cold War. What better for an imperialist country than to have a puppet government that not only sends its own people to war, but also disguises itself as helping the revolution. While the Soviet revisionists spoke of peaceful coexistence and world peace, the Cuban pimps exported their guerrillas to other countries with Soviet weapons and equipment, showing by any means the advantages of being a State faithful to the interests of the USSR.

When judging the actions of a State towards another country, we Marxist-Leninists have the obligation to characterize the State that sends the "aid", the forces that receive it, the forces in conflict and the concrete results of those actions. Only in this way can we avoid placing ourselves on the side of one or another camp of the bourgeoisie. In this case, it is a mistake to speak of internationalism, but rather that the actions of the Cubans cannot be characterized

other than as a mercenary service of a regime that, in exchange for its actions, received credits and preferential prices.⁶

Castro and Guevara, antirevisionists?

Another myth that seems to reappear is the assertion of an apparently anti-revisionist role of the main Cuban leaders.

In Castro's case, his theoretical contributions are extremely scarce; there is no one who questions that he was best as a public speaker, where he specialized in frequently making speeches that lasted for hours. His promoters also claim his independence from the USSR due to his participation in third world organizations or in the Non-Aligned Movement.

Previously we remarked on Castro's evident anti-communism in his first years as a statesman; it is enough to review his speeches to quickly become aware of his anti-Marxist vocabulary and theories.

Regarding their independence in terms of international policy towards the USSR mentioned above, it is worth remembering the economic dependence that the Cuban revisionists had on that superpower, so that all their actions in these organizations – one must note that participation in these Coordination with reactionary states such as Tito's Yugoslavia is one more pearl in the necklace – was in the service of their Soviet bosses⁷.

Paradoxically, others of Castro's "theoretical" pillars, such as the fight for peace and the environment, are quite a contradiction. On the one hand, we described above the mercenary character of the

6 Between 1960 and 1975, the Soviets had granted \$7,000 million dollars to Cuba, while in the period 1976-1979 during the boom in the sending of Cuban troops to Africa this figure was \$10,000 million.

7 To illustrate this, it is useful to quote a comment from that period by Comrade Enver Hoxha, who said: "At the conference of the 'non-aligned' held in Algiers, the Soviets are preparing to operate through Fidel Castro, whom they are supplying with at least a million and a half dollars a day. In recent months, the bearded Castro attacked both China and Albania, but without mentioning them by name. According to him, the Soviet Union is a genuine socialist country and part of the "third world". This gramophone of the Soviets will put forward these theses in Algeria, too". (The Tactic of Many Lines in China – A Practice Raised to a Principle – 1973)

Cuban army in Africa. Regarding the environment, Cuba today still has an energy source almost exclusively made up of oil and, due to the low technical level of its economy, is not at the cutting edge of the process of emission reduction.

We cannot even highlight his belated opposition to Perestroika, seeing that Cuba went through its own!

Undoubtedly, the one who stands out the most for his theoretical contributions within the Cuban Communist Party was Ernesto “Che” Guevara.

Guevara, in addition to being an exemplary figure in what we call the left, due to his practical legacy, had a rather voluminous work in which he addressed different issues regarding both economic construction, as well as the military, participating in the different discussions of his time in what the revisionists call the International Communist Movement.

To his merit, we can highlight in Guevara’s remarkable evolution as his work progressed chronologically, given his interest in the study of the classics of Marxism-Leninism. This led him to take interesting positions such as the staunch defense of economic planning, the need to industrialize the country with emphasis on heavy industry, debating with the island’s economists to oppose the establishment of the Soviet revisionist model and even, timidly, to outline a criticism regarding some postulates of the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

Despite this, we cannot affirm that Guevara was a Marxist-Leninist, much less an anti-revisionist or a cadre from whom we must compulsorily accept his theoretical contributions.

If we highlight his chronological evolution, it would be incorrect to attack it for the thesis that he later stopped defending; therefore, we will outline those ideas that he defended until the end of his days.

Firstly, we must highlight his contempt for the study of the subjective conditions and general laws of the seizure of political power based on the experience of the peoples’ struggle. This is perhaps one of the most recognizable aspects of foquism: according to these, it is not necessary that the conditions exist for the seizure of power, but rather that the advance of the guerrilla struggle will create them:

“We need not always wait for all the revolutionary conditions to be present; the insurrection itself can create them.” (Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*)

This thesis leads him to other deviations of considerable importance, such as his disregard for the need to organize a Marxist-Leninist Party that first exercises the leadership of the revolutionary movement and then of socialist construction. Why patiently build a Party if the foco creates all the conditions?⁸

For example, the proof of this is in his journey through Africa where, in addition that for him it was not important to build a party, he recognized with amazement⁹ the conditions of those who were supposed to make the revolution, dominated by highly counterproductive mystical beliefs, the presence of openly corrupt leaders and the excessive proliferation of drugs, alcohol, and prostitution by the guerrillas; this fact speaks of the lack of planning and knowledge of the terrain which he was getting into.

Another of Guevara's main deviations was the replacement of the proletariat as the subject of the Revolution since; for him the driving force was the peasantry:

“The guerrilla fighter is above all an agrarian revolutionary.

He interprets the desires of the great peasant mass to be owners of land, owners of their means of production, of their animals, of all that which they have long yearned to call their own, of that which constitutes their life and will also serve as their cemetery.” (Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*).

Later, in his "Critical Notes on Political Economy", he would further develop his conception, coming to the reactionary conclusion that the *whole* working class of the imperialist countries are part of the labor aristocracy since, according to him, they are accomplices of imperialism due to the fact that earn wages higher than a worker in a semi-colonial country, while the latter are above the peasants since they have a guaranteed wage and sometimes benefit from the investments of the monopolies (sic!).

Imagine a worker in China, a country that has based its capitalist foundations on its competitiveness based on low wages, or without going so far, the hundreds of thousands of precarious workers in

8 Even after the seizure of Power, the Cuban revisionists, with Guevara a participant in the events, went through various acronyms towards the unification of all legal political organizations in Cuba, which meant the organic fusion of very diverse elements, leading to the struggle of factions and ideological divisions in the party organizations.

9 See *Congo Diary*.

the European Union! Who in their right mind can argue that they constitute the labor aristocracy?!

This led to the argument:

“The cases of China, Vietnam and Cuba show the incorrectness of the thesis [that the proletariat is the most advanced class in capitalist society]. In the first two cases, the participation of the proletariat was null or little. In Cuba, the struggle was not led by the party of the working class but by a multi-class movement that became radical after the seizure of political power.” (Guevara, “Critical Notes on Political Economy.”)

This reveals another of Guevara's mistakes. It is necessary first to explain that in the Chinese Revolution, although the peasantry was the majority class *numerically speaking*, in the beginning the ones who led the fight against the Japanese invasion and against the Kuomintang was the proletariat actively supported by their class brothers in the Communist International who guided this process through its ideology and program. After Mao assumed the leadership of the CCP with his revisionist theses, the peasantry was the predominant force for a long period, which led to the stagnation of the Chinese revolution that would limit itself to bourgeois-democratic tasks. The same fate was suffered by Vietnam and Cuba, which were not even able to obtain their economic independence.

Here lies Guevara's mistake: according to him, all the States and Parties that proclaimed themselves socialists automatically became such. Even seeing the great contradictions in the Yugoslav and Soviet economic systems, for him they were "comrades" who had chosen another path and who had their experience, since at no time did "Che" recognize (in fact he openly rejected) the existence of objective laws for the construction of socialism.

As a result of this, he never broke with revisionism or deepened an open criticism of those who destroyed the most glorious historical process of humanity, which brought millions of women and men closer to the definitive liberation from exploitation.

Despite his criticisms and observations, Guevara accepted and promoted the Soviet leadership until the end in what he continued to call the "socialist camp" – even in the late 1960s – which caused great harm to contemporary revolutionaries, given how contradictory it was that someone of his influence and critical appearance continued to give credit to the USSR in the eyes of the masses.

Finally, the last notable point was his excessive economic voluntarism, a deviation that made him overestimate the weight of consciousness in the revolutionary construction.

In addition to developing an obsession against the New Economic Policy promoted by Lenin, on numerous occasions this led him to propose the elimination of material incentives, since according to him, the consciousness and desire of the workers should be enough to carry out any process, ignoring the fact that it is material conditions that determine people's consciousness and not the other way around.

We cannot develop in depth the conception of Guevara's economic policy, but it is very necessary to warn that some of his measures (for example, the elimination of paper money, forced collectivization, total elimination of economic accounting) caused severe setbacks to the Cuban economy and he was quickly replaced by the Cuban government.¹⁰

Cuba after the fall of the pro-Soviet bloc: greater openness, greater dependence

As a result of the dependent nature of its economy, after the fall of the USSR, the Cuban government was forced to take drastic measures: it promoted a real adjustment concerning the working class and implemented an economic reform that stimulated the development of direct foreign investment and monetary-commodity relations in its economy.

As a result of this, there was a fiscal deficit of 30% of GDP, which they tried to disguise through the printing of paper money without backing. This led to prices being increased by a factor of nine and the real salary of workers being reduced by 70%, imitating the "neoliberal" prescriptions of the Latin American governments of the time.

Legally, these measures were accompanied by others implemented from 1992 to 1996, such as a Constitutional Reform, authorization and expansion of self-employment, decriminalization of

10 It can be argued that Guevara left the island due to his clashes with the pro-Soviet economists who already controlled the island's economic destinies, but the truth is that the aforementioned errors and dependence on Soviet credits were decisive when defining the economic debate in Cuba.

possession of hard currency, the law on foreign investment, and the creation of Free Trade Zones and Industrial Parks for private capital, which can undoubtedly be considered a clear opening towards western monopoly capital, mainly focused on tourism and the biotechnology industry. Paradoxically, it was Spanish capital that took the greatest advantage of this opening, glad to be able to invest with tax exemptions.

They also wagered on decentralization in the countryside and in 1993 it was decreed that the producers of the cooperatives could buy the means of production from the State, for which they were offered credits. As a result of decentralization, in 1996 78% of the land passed into private hands.

In the 2000s, the export of medical services grew in importance, becoming Cuba's main export. Unfortunately – far from what we are being led to believe and what the revisionist propaganda states – the sending of Cuban doctors to dependent countries with poor health-care systems is not the product of the "internationalist solidarity" of the Cuban government but one of its greatest sources of income^{11 12}.

Today, Cuba is an openly capitalist state in which the protagonists of development, according to the island's propagandists, are the small owners and foreign investment.

The fall of the “progressive” governments and especially the draconian economic crisis that Venezuela is experiencing means a severe setback for the economy. One can see that the aid of its main partners is diminishing year by year, which has strongly reinforced

11 It is important to highlight what this means in terms of exploitation. In these cases, the Cuban doctors, sent to remote areas that are notoriously backward in health, earn salaries well below the amount established in each country and a small percentage compared to the dividends that this creates for the State. On the other hand, just as what was happening in Africa, the way that revisionism profits from misery and sells it to the people as internationalist solidarity is highly repugnant.

12 To get an idea of the importance of the export of medical services by Cuba, it can be noted that in 2018 \$6,398,538.80 (millions of pesos) were exported, while nickel, the main export item, reached \$775,869.00. However, we must add to this figure the Venezuelan oil that Cuba imports in exchange for these services to Venezuela and then resells it, which amounted to \$204,121.00 in that same year.

the need for people to take many jobs and engage in informal economic activity.¹³

This highlights once again the perpetual dependence on the foreign market on which Cuban revisionism is based and clearly departs from the Marxist-Leninist postulates regarding economic construction based on the country's own forces.

To support these two statements, we highlight the fact that Cuba's exports to Venezuela between 2013 and 2015 – before the crisis of the “Chavista model” – was close to 43%, while in 2018 – the last year recorded – it 61% of exports were limited to three countries: Canada (22.3%), Venezuela (19.5%) and China (19.2%).

In this sense, it is interesting to show how, starting with the crisis that is plaguing the Venezuelan people, the export index dropped considerably from 4,857,468,000 in 2014 to 3,349,640,000 2,316,934,000 and 2,401,688,000 in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively, with Venezuela going from a peak of 42.9% in 2013 to a low point of 15.6% in 2017.

After the holding of the VI and VII Congresses of the PCC in 2011 and 2016 respectively, new measures of economic opening were promoted. Any pro-Cuban revisionist party would call this a fierce advance of the right and neoliberalism if they were promoted by the government of another country.

Undoubtedly the most notable were the approval of a new foreign investment law to attract foreign capital to the island and the promotion of the petty-bourgeois element in the economy disguised as "self-employment."

To understand the second point, it is important to highlight the existence of a large community of Cubans residing in the United States, who numbered 1,110,000 in 2016, many of them with their families in Cuba. In this sense, to the earlier possibility of owning hard currency was added the possibility of investing it, whether or not they were regular residents on the island. This added to a growing liberalization of travel to the island, which made the "Miami worms" into one of the engines of economic growth.

In numerical terms, in 2015 remittances to Cuba were US \$3,355 million¹⁴, a figure very close to the \$3,349 million of total commodity exports.

13 Torres Perez Ricardo. *Cuba: National Productive Economic Profile*, Havana (2019)

Some of the measures included in the Self-Employment Law were the possibility of hiring employees outside the family nucleus, the possibility of accessing bank loans and the leasing of public spaces.

As a result of these policies, the number of “self-employed workers” increased from 46,650 in 1981 to 496,400 in 2016, to which should be added a not inconsiderable number of informal workers.

Meanwhile, the 2014 Foreign Investment Law set the goal of receiving between \$2,000 and \$2,500 million dollars annually just through the new features proposed by the law. The meaning of this is quite obvious, but as an example, in 2015, thanks to the rapprochement with the United States, 500 authorizations were issued to US companies to invest, with a total value of \$4.3 billion dollars.

It is interesting to highlight the importance that the Cuban regime gives to foreign direct investment as a means of development in its official documents, not to mention in studies carried out by its academics. Before drawing conclusions in this regard, it is necessary to emphasize the difficulty that the Cuban revisionists have in calling things by their real names. The petty bourgeois are called self-employed, private companies with local capital are called “non-state socialist SMEs [Small and Medium Enterprises]”; it is not to be expected that they will admit that foreign investment is being prioritized in order to deepen capitalist relations in their economy.

Even so, there are quite explicit statements about the importance of attracting imperialist capital. For example, in the Business Portfolio for Foreign Investment in Cuba one can read its general principles:

“One can conceive foreign investment as a source of economic development for the country in the short, medium and long term. Its attraction should be set as objectives: access to advanced technologies, the implementation of managerial methods, the diversification and expansion of export markets, import substitution, access to external financing, the creation of

14 To this should be added the remittances constituted through the shipment of commodities and the payment of services, which would provide an income of \$6,500 million in 2018, according to the consulting firm THCG.

new sources of employment and the recruitment of greater income from productive links with the national economy.”

Under this conception, fiscal incentives of all kinds are also proposed, also for the hiring of labor; construction of infrastructure with State money, and customs exemptions among others.

In addition to creating a Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment, one of the most regressive points is that companies cannot directly hire their own personnel; rather it is the Cuban State that supplies them: The workers of Cuban “socialism” not only have to create surplus value for multinationals, but also have to give a share of their work to the State!

This has created great contradictions in the case of the delegations of specialists sent abroad who, despite being the country's largest source of income, are forced to work abroad for really low salaries, not only compared to doctors in the destination country but also in relation to a worker; this is the reason for the desertion of thousands of specialists who choose not to return to the island.

We must not only see the character of this measure, but also its political consequences for the working class, since this hiring mechanism makes unionization difficult and uses the State to put out the fires of the workers' struggles. It is well known how in our countries companies outsource the personnel of certain sectors so that in case they form organizations, other workers can be sent from the companies to redistribute the unionized workers to places where they can cause less trouble.

Reflecting the reactionary nature of foreign investment in this case, the Cuban economist Ricardo Torres Perez stated:

“...one part of their competitiveness is based on extremely low wage costs compared to international standards, plus transfers from the state at very low cost for very long periods.... Competitiveness is essentially based on costs, which puts downward pressure on trickle downs, particularly including wages.”

Advocates of revisionism are often heard to say that the economic opening of recent years is similar to the NEP promoted by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in Soviet Russia after the civil war. Here one must "separate the wheat from the chaff" and emphasize that the objective of the NEP was to not to stimulate small production, while Cuba encourages it; foreign investment was made under

extremely short-term lease agreements, while in Cuba it is explicitly stated that this will be long-term.

But the most important thing is to understand that the NEP, far from being a universal law of socialist construction, was a concrete measure for a country that was emerging from an imperialist war and a civil war and was urgently needed to start production with the objective of developing its heavy industry as the motor of the economy. However, the Cuban revisionists have been in power for 60 years and have had ample opportunity to diversify their economy when they received favorable prices and credits from the social-imperialists, but they preferred to focus on the mono-production of sugar. Then there was tourism, and now after a process of sustained deindustrialization, private capital is called in for import substitution, especially in foodstuffs; there is no industrialization to create sovereignty.

With all this, it is easy to conclude that the development of the Cuban model is moving away from socialism and is becoming increasingly close to the open capitalist economy of a traditional type.

Its international policy continues to be just as mercenary as in the Soviet period, putting its ideological propaganda offices at the service of its current benefactor. When Venezuela accounted for more than 40% of its exports, the “Communist” Party of Cuba was an ideologue of 21st Century Socialism; when the ground was opened for foreign investment in addition to tourism and there was the possibility of Russian and Chinese investment, Castro dedicated his last writings to the promotion of the BRICS as an alternative for the liberation of the peoples; even when Obama relaxed the sanctions on Cuba, Cuban media such as Cubadebate or Prensa Latina made propaganda for the Democratic Party.

Conclusions

In summary, we can conclude that in Cuba Socialism does not and did not exist; rather on the contrary, it is today a backward and dependent capitalist state.

This leads us to think about the role that the Cuban Revolution has played; despite having served as a stimulus to a whole generation of revolutionary militants, from a Marxist-Leninist point of view its contribution was clearly regressive in the sense that it acted as one that legitimates both social-imperialist policies and other

revisionist postulates such as the Non-Aligned bloc and support for nationalist regimes.

On the other hand, with evident notoriety its economic construction has moved away from socialist experiences, deepened its dependence and maintained its economic backwardness and the mono-production of sugar inherited from the Batista regime.

At present, Cuba supports and maintains fraternal relations with the revisionist parties that we have to confront at the same time as it spreads and accepts harmful conceptions such as 21st Century Socialism and promotes the support of the backward countries, fundamentally in Russia and China.

As part of this assessment, it is necessary to think about what would have happened to the Cuban process if it had not been supported by Soviet revisionism. The truth is that in light of the facts it can be affirmed, without a doubt, that *the passage from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist construction was never in the mind of the Cuban leaders.*

This process began as an aspiration of the national bourgeoisie to contend with the U.S. for the surplus value produced by the workers, even asking the Pentagon for permission to do so. That the intensification of measures aimed at the nationalization or expropriation of the means of production took place after the United States applied sanctions on Cuba says a lot about this.

What would have happened if, instead of taking refuge with the Soviets, they had embarked on the path of relying on their own forces by diversifying trade? Could the Cuban revolution have counted on China¹⁵ and Albania? The only thing we know is that it would have been a complicated undertaking, but up to now we think that it was the only valid way to follow the path of the triumphant Socialist Revolution in the 1960s. As for the possibility of this path, we clearly have no way of knowing.

What we do know is that the Cuban experience itself demonstrated the impossibility of inter-bourgeois alliances outside of an imperialist bloc. The false Latin Americanism that they preach today hit them in the face when all countries except Mexico voted to expel them from the OAS. The Non-Aligned countries, a bloc of which Cuba was a member, largely consisted of puppet govern-

15 Taking into account that the Asian giant was considered an ally of the anti-revisionist camp in the 1960s.

ments that pushed for the incorporation of member states into the zone of influence of this or that power, and the countries of the so-called third world – another bloc that Cuba took part in – followed the same path as Castro, since neither achieved an independent capitalist development as they preached.

This also showed that the National Liberation struggles, when they are not supported and sustained by a proletarian state, are condemned to be the reserve of imperialism, as happened throughout this period. The situation of the peoples in the current semi-colonial and dependent countries puts on the agenda the need to advance rapidly towards socialism: only the struggle of the proletariat together with other working classes will be able to break with dependence on imperialism and move towards Socialism and Communism.

The revival by some parties with a revolutionary tradition and by new generations of communists who now see Castro's Cuba as a model to follow and spread among the masses, shows us the importance of reinforcing the study of Marxism-Leninism in general and of the socialist experiences in particular, in contrast to that experience.

At a time when the exacerbation of the crisis of capitalism is awakening the anger of the masses towards the current regimes, it is essential to bring to them the achievements and victories of the workers of the Soviet Union led by Lenin and Stalin, of the People's Republic of Albania and the other states of people's democracy, which despite their short positive experience taught us that the proletariat can take the destiny of their respective countries into their hands, overcoming the contradictions of capitalist society.

On the contrary, it does not harm the capitalists to support a regime in a state of decomposition and which has always run contrary to our purposes.

In this scenario, the fight against revisionism as an agent of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement and a declared enemy of Marxism-Leninism continues to be a fundamental task for the communists. Within the framework of this scenario we must denounce and expose Cuba as a capitalist State which disguises itself as socialist to more easily exploit its workers and to deceive the working class on the international level. Therefore, we must expose Castro, Guevara and other Cuban leaders as representatives of revisionism that they are.

The confrontation with revisionism and its representatives only strengthens our parties and clears the way for the masses in their struggle for liberation.

It is time to take up again the legacy of the anti-revisionist movement, and in particular of the PLA and its fight against modern revisionism, the defense and dissemination of Marxism-Leninism as an integral part of our work for the construction of the party of the proletariat, for the Revolution and Socialism. .

September 2020

In Venezuela the Struggle Advances in the Midst of Contradictions

The Venezuelan political moment is determined by the exacerbation of all the contradictions, especially: 1. Capital – labor. 2. inter-imperialist, 3. imperialist powers – dependent country.

The capitalist contradictions are exacerbated by the cyclical crisis and Yankee aggression, as well as by the vacillating economic policies of a petty bourgeois government. The problems at the economic, social and political level affect the whole society, especially the workers, with peculiarities typical of a country that is resisting and fighting against imperialist aggression.

The historical confrontation between the interests of the oppressed in Venezuela and the imperialist oppression by the US has a long history, becoming more and more significant every day due to the undeniable impact in all spheres of national life, leading the country towards radicalization and the decomposition of the State as a consequence of the most criminal siege and blockade by the US-EU imperialist alliance and their lackeys.

The divergences among imperialist powers are evident. Their agreements and disagreements have repercussions on the daily events of the country, in many aspects marking its internal policy and determining its external one, as one more expression of the struggle for a new redivision of the world between the US-EU imperialist bloc and that of China-Russia for control of raw materials, markets, workforce and geo-strategic points.

The contradiction between capital and labor exists at all times, but it is not expressed only in the struggle for wages or for economic demands; it is also expressed, in the highest form of the class struggle; in raising consciousness: in the political struggle, with the seizure of companies and lands, with the experience of control of the means of production, which is ultimately the course for the struggle for power.

In decades of struggle the Venezuelan people have consolidated positions of greater political clarity and have put into practice, under difficult conditions, the action of resistance against the aggression of imperialism, mainly Yankee imperialism, uniting the masses in a

broad national revolutionary movement led, until now, by the petty bourgeoisie in a process of radicalization caused mainly by external threats and by internal pressure from the popular masses.

It is true that the most conscious masses have taken up the policy of critical support with demands by supporting the decision not to give in to the imperialist aggression, with correct criticisms of the flirtations with the big bourgeoisie, typical of the petty-bourgeois ideology, and its lack of confidence in the forces of the working class. Also making demands and fighting in all spheres against the causes of the deviations and errors typical of multi-class parties.

Along this path, we, the people and the vanguard of the proletariat, the Marxist Leninists and consistent revolutionaries, have understood the importance of the resistance to imperialist aggression as the axis of a broad policy of accumulation of forces. We see the struggle for control by the revolutionary workers and peasants as the way forward, in real connection with the daily struggles of the people, promoting Popular Unity and confronting reaction. We criticize the incorrect policies of the government, as well as the electoral economism expressed by the revisionist party and its most degenerate Trotskyist partners. These base their tactics on reforms within the parliamentary formalities of bourgeois democracy, especially on bourgeois-democratic opportunist demagoguery.

For the Marxist-Leninists of the dependent countries, the tactic is based on theses established when addressing the national and colonial problem, in proletarian internationalism, as in the practice that leads to the accumulation of forces through the raising of class consciousness, locating what is, at a given moment, the nerve center capable of



bringing together the most advanced and conscious forces.

We are consistent fighters, part of a people that is resisting and struggling, members of the worker, trade union, peasant and community organizations, which in all forms of struggle contribute our experience and resources to carry out the project of social and national emancipation. The CC of the PCMLV recognizes the need to understand what is the main danger and the common enemy in order to direct all the energies of the international proletariat inflict a defeat on it. We must channel the revolutionary forces of the imperialist and dependent countries towards their real strategic objectives through the struggle, promoting the Popular Anti-imperialist Front.

Faced with the permanent imperialist threat and the deepening of the Yankee aggression, with its direct effects (seizure of goods and theft of assets) as well as consequences (scarcity of resources for purchases abroad and paralysis of industry) the different social classes, the factions of these and their parties take a position, developing their actions according to their material and ideological basis:

The imperialist bourgeoisie of the US-EU bloc presents its right-wing, reactionary, arrogant and aggressive plan. They demand direct military intervention to “get rid of the Maduro dictatorship”; they are represented in the Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VENAMCHAM), their economic policy is lockout and sabotage.

The monopolies of China and Russia are working to win trade contracts, to sell their commodities at international prices and seek opportunities for their process of accumulation.

The local bourgeoisie is divided into two factions: the traditional pro-Yankee, sell-out and lackey bourgeoisie, directly subjected to Yankee imperialism, expressed in the eliminated leadership of AD (Democratic Action) and PJ (Justice First), CONSECOMERCIO (National Council of Commerce and Services), FEDENAGA (National Federation of Ranchers), their policy is collaboration with and servility to the United States.

The emerging pro-Russian / Chinese bourgeoisie that does business with these powers as a form of capital accumulation; it expresses itself as a faction within the PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela) and other parties of the Bolivarian process. It is organized in FEDEINDUSTRIAS (Federation of Industries), CONFAGAN (Federation of Agriculturists and Ranchers), they

work for renegotiating dependence on the monopolies of China and Russia.

The middle bourgeoisie finds itself without a particular program or organization; it supports any bourgeois tendency that offers it a piece, even a tiny piece, of the pie.

The petty bourgeoisie is in various organizations and parties of the left and right. It is expressed in the Bolivarian government as well as in the opposition; from the ideological point of view, it forms the hegemonic force in the PSUV it hesitates between negotiating with the imperialists and becoming more radical.

The proletariat is also divided, and that is the main cause of its weakness. One part is found in the PSUV at the tail end of the politics of the vacillating petty bourgeoisie; another is in the revisionist Communist Party and other reformist political organizations, which in times of elections goes from tailism to virulent "leftism", according to how their participation is remunerated; it expresses the opportunist ideology. At the moment it is on the path of a pro-Trotskyist policy with great internal contradictions.

Another part of the proletariat is found in the PCMLV and other Marxist-Leninist organizations that are advancing in the policy of critical support with demands, waging a battle on the theoretical and practical terrain, against left opportunism and infantilism, gaining support among the rank-and-file of the honest movement that has a national revolutionary sense and demands socialism, working systematically to build the Anti-imperialist Popular Front at the national and international level and to carry out important work in the midst of complex contradictions, preparing the bases to take up the forms of struggle appropriate to the next and most complex junctures.

**Socialism Is Only Built with the Workers Peasant Alliance
in Power and the People in Arms**

*CC of the PCMLV
October 2020*