

Unity & Struggle

ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF MARXIST-LENINIST PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Unidad y Lucha

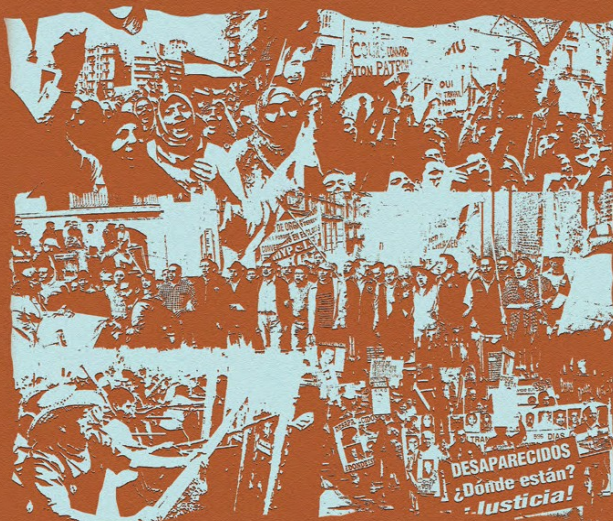
ÓRGANO DE LA CONFERENCIA INTERNACIONAL DE PARTIDOS Y ORGANIZACIONES MARXISTA-LENINISTAS

Unité et Lutte

ORGAN DE LA CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE DES PARTIS ET ORGANISATIONS MARXISTES-LÉNINISTES

November 2016

33



**THE CLASS STRUGGLE IS
THE MOTIVE FORCE OF HISTORY**

Workers of the World, Unite!

Unity & Struggle

Journal of the
International Conference of
Marxist-Leninist Parties
and Organizations



No. 33 – November of 2016

Unity & Struggle

Journal of the International Conference
of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations.

Published in English, Spanish, Turkish,
Arabic, Portuguese and German
as the responsibility of the Coordinating Committee
of the International Conference.

Any opinions expressed in this journal belong
to the contributors.

Postal Address: Verlag AZ, Postfach 401051,
D-70410, Stuttgart, Germany

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Brazil

Revolutionary Communist Party - Brazil

Luis Falcao

A Popular and Revolutionary Alternative to the Crisis in Brazil

On August 31, by a vote of 61 to 20 the Federal Senate approved the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, elected by 54 million Brazilians on October 27, 2014.

This process began on December 2 last year by the then president of the Chamber of Deputies, Eduardo Cunha (PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party]) with the goal of removing his own expulsion for corruption from the agenda of the Chamber and making his comrade and friend Michel Temer the president.¹

The accusation against Dilma was that she violated the Constitution by authorizing expenditures without prior approval of the National Congress and by having used credits from the Bank of Brazil to finance farmers. The president's defense proved that the money was used for education and agriculture. However, what they were seeking was not really whether or not there was criminal responsibility, but to find something that could be a formal reason for the process of removing a president with a low rate of popular support and who had her propaganda chief confess to having received unaccounted-for money for the president's election campaign.

The proponents of impeachment keep on repeating that the president had a broad right of defense, both in the Chamber of Deputies, where the impeachment was approved by 367 of the 513 deputies, and in the Federal Senate, as well as in the session chaired by the President of the Supreme Court (STF). None of this, however, denies the fact that the allegations made against the elected president do not fall under any category of responsi-

¹ Despite this maneuver, on September 12 Deputy Eduardo Cunha ended up being impeached by 450 deputies, with only 10 votes in his favor.

bility² and so her removal is a parliamentary coup.

Suffice it to say that such actions carried out by the government were always approved and considered correct and within the law by the Federal Court of Accounts (TCU). However, this court changed its position in 2015, only to give support to the process of impeachment that was already formulated by the principal leaders of the PMDB, a party that, since the end of the military dictatorship has been part of all the governments, whether losing or winning elections, of the PSDB [Brazilian Social Democracy Party], DEM [Democrats], PPS [Popular Socialist Party] and SD [Solidarity], among other bourgeois parties.

A reactionary congress against the workers

But why, if there was no criminal responsibility, was the impeachment approved?

First, because this congress is one of the most reactionary in our history. According to the Inter-Union Department of Parliamentary Consultancy (DIAP), despite a renewal of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate in the 2014 elections, there was an increase in military, religious, landowner and other sectors identified with conservatism and a significant decrease in the number of parliamentary deputies committed to the interests of the workers. In the last legislature, 83 members defended the cause of the workers; in the current one, there are barely 50 deputies and 9 senators. On the other hand, 250 federal deputies and senators declared themselves defenders of the entrepreneurs.

Second, because the big national and international bourgeoisie wanted urgently to implement the so-called fiscal adjustment program and in particular a comprehensive reform of the labor laws and because it believed that Dilma's government would not go so far.

² According to the Brazilian Constitution, article 85, criminal responsibility means conduct that violates the Constitution and especially that threatens the existence of the Union, the free exercise of the Powers of State, the internal security of the country, the probity of the administration, the Budget Law, the exercise of political, individual and social rights and the enforcement of laws and judicial decisions.

Third, because of the rightward movement of the Workers Party (PT), which, in order to elect and re-elect Lula and then Dilma, abandoned its progressive platform and broke its ties with the workers and popular movement. For this it bureaucratized the United Workers Federation (CUT), making its president the Minister of Labor and then a prefect of San Bernardo, it strengthened the Força Sindical as well as employer's federations and, with the support of the PCdoB [Communist Party of Brazil], made the National Union of Students (UNE) into a bureaucratic entity that limits itself to supporting the Ministry of Education (MEC) and holding lavishly financed congresses. Recently it was discovered that the PT, while it was in the Federal Government, continued the corruption in public works by collecting bribes from companies that performed works for Petrobras or for the ministries, claiming that this money was necessary to fund election campaigns.

Let us recall here what we wrote in the newspaper *A Verdade* (*The Truth*), in the edition of March of 2010, in the article "Where are you going?" that analyzed the decisions of the 4th Congress of the PT, held from February 18 to 20 of that year:

"The retrogression of the PT did not just start now, nor did it take place suddenly. Lula himself, in an interview with the newspaper Estado de Sao Paulo, declared that 'the PT that came to power with me, in 2002, is no longer the PT of 1980 or 1982'.

"Theoretically weak and never having tried to fully understand Marxism-Leninism, the revolutionary theory of the working class, the PT was born by disregarding scientific socialism for a vague 'PT-type socialism'. It soon became a party dominated by petty-bourgeois groups, without the ideological firmness necessary to confront the dominant ideas in capitalist society, that is bourgeois ideology and morality.

"It began by receiving millions in donations for its election campaigns. Afterwards, it accepted the membership of employers, who became known as 'PT entrepreneurs' and finally it ended up defending the private ownership of the means of production and finance capital tooth and nail, claiming that this was necessary to ensure 'governability'.

"Today, various leaders of the PT are consultants for large national and foreign private companies and they, or their children, have become entrepreneurs. This is the case with Jose

Dirceu, consultant to one of the richest men in the world, the billionaire Carlos Slim, owner of Embratel and Claro, and Mr. Nelson Santos, owner of Star Overseas, an offshore company based in the Virgin Islands, among others mega-capitalists.

“From a party that lived exclusively from the contributions of its members and parliamentary representatives, the PT has become the legal party that received the most donations from bankers and business owners. From 2002 to 2004, donations from banks for the PT jumped from 520 thousand reales to 5.7 million reales, an increase of 1,000%. In the 2006 elections, the PT candidate, President Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva, received 10.5 million reales from the banks.

“Moreover, this intimate relationship of the PT with the entrepreneurs was defined by the chair of the Federation of Industries of the State of Sao Paulo (FIESP), Paulo Skaf, as ‘excellent and affectionate’ (Folha de Sao Paulo, February 7, 2010).

“Well, as even a child knows, this money donated by the banks and big business is no disinterested charity; it has a purpose which is to receive in exchange work contracts, financing and economic measures that favor them when the party is in the government.

“The consequence of this relationship of ‘affection’ with the employers, as it could not fail to be, was the loss of influence by the members in the direction of the party, the weakening and bureaucratization of its ties with the workers’ movement and the abandonment of proposals for popular participation in the economic decisions of the country” (A Verdade, no. 114, March 2010).

How did the PT govern?

Let us remember that six years after that statement, Mr. Paulo Skaf, chair of the FIESP, became one of the main financers of the demonstrations for the impeachment of Dilma, together with the Commercial Association of Sao Paulo (ACSP), the National Confederation of Industry (CNI), among other national business entities.

The truth is that during the almost 14 years that the PT was in the government, it took no actions that would disturb the interests of the ruling classes, such as taxes on large fortunes, the re-

nationalization of state enterprises privatized by the PSDB, control over remittances of the profits of the multinationals, limitation on the activity of finance capital, nor did it act against the privatization of Brazilian oil, of health care or the commodification of education. What we saw during the PT governments was the expansion of the domination of foreign capital, the deindustrialization and the return of the national economy to being an exporter of raw materials and agricultural (primary) products, today called reprimarization, characteristic of the colonial period. In addition to this, the PT moved away from the struggles of the masses, once these struggles were aimed directly at a confrontation with the government that did not pay attention to their demands or with the capitalists who financed their lavish election campaigns.

In fact, the objective of the PT government and its policy of class conciliation, called “coalition presidentialism,” was never to place any obstacles to the rule of the bourgeois class over the economy and politics of the country, but to protect the bosses and ensure their exploitation of the workers.

It is a fact that the people had various of their rights respected, especially the right to demonstrate and that they actually had social programs that improved the living conditions of the poorest people, the real increase in the minimum wage; however, no deep structural transformation in the economy and politics took place.

In short, the governments of the PT carried out small reforms, but none of them placed in jeopardy the interests of the



bourgeoisie or of private ownership of the means of production. They did not even have the courage to reform the media and the land reform continues to be shelved. This is not a new phenomenon in history, nor is it unique in recent years; it is a natural consequence of a party dominated by petty-bourgeois ideology. Look at Athens, for example, with the recent betrayal of Syriza, the party that was elected by the Greek people to oppose the austerity policy of the European Union, which went on to implement it without resistance and without shame.

Worse: even after being the victim of a blow devised and carried out by the big national bourgeoisie, that is, the class of owners of the banks, the large industries, the means of production, the large agricultural enterprises and the land, the PT insists on swearing allegiance, not to the workers and popular movement, but to the bourgeoisie itself. The PT says that the existence of a democratic center is essential for democracy and that thanks to that center, we defeated the dictatorship in Brazil and that the PMDB, that democratic center, has a good part (Renan Calheiros, current President of the Senate, and Jose Sarney, former President of the Republic) and a bad part (Eduardo Cunha and Michel Temer).

Well, the military dictatorship ended, but another continued, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Because the democracy that we have today is a mere formality in our country, as the current parliamentary coup shows clearly. All the major decisions are made without the participation of the people and those who claim to be their representatives are elected thanks to the millionaire electoral campaigns.

Besides, in the interest of truth, this democratic center was not the main or decisive factor in putting an end to the military dictatorship. If it had not been for the workers' strikes, the student and popular demonstrations, the struggle of the revolutionaries who took up arms against the regime of the generals, such as Manoel Lisboa, Carlos Lamarca, Yara Iavenberg and Carlos Marighella, who lost their lives in the dungeons of the regime, the country would not have buried the fascist regime in 1985. In other words, if we had waited for this "democratic center," we would still have a general in the presidency of Brazil today.

Where are we going?

The fact is that, with the approval of the impeachment by the Senate and the confirmation of the parliamentary coup, a new stage in the class struggle in our country has begun. A significant part of the class-conscious workers now know that they cannot count on the PT or the PCdoB to carry out profound changes in Brazilian society, because these parties have become bourgeois, they have become social democratic parties, supporters of class conciliation, capitalism and bourgeois democracy, even when it shows its dictatorial aspect. The proof of this is that Deputy Rodrigo Maia of the DEM, one of the main organizers of Dilma's impeachment, after his election to the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies on July 14, gave special thanks to Deputy Orlando Silva of the PCdoB, for having gone to his house to request him to be candidate and to Daniel Almeida, leader of the PCdoB, for the support that he received from that party.

On the other hand, the parliamentary coup that removed President Dilma Rousseff, elected by more than 54 million Brazilians and imposed the government of Michel Temer (PMDB) on the nation, aggravated instead of reduced the political and economic crisis in our country.

The proof of the deep political crisis is that three ministers in



Sign reads: "We have nothing to fear," but also
"We have nothing (to do) with Temer. Popular Unity"

the new government have already been dismissed for being involved in corruption; the government has been set back regarding several of the measures adopted, such as the dissolution of the Ministry of Culture, the cancellation of the contracts with Me Casa Mi Vida (MCMV – My House My Life), in addition to the growing popular discrediting and disapproval of the government. It is noteworthy that these victories were made possible due to hundreds of popular demonstrations and the growing support by the people of the slogan “TEMER MUST GO.”

Add to that the worsening economic crisis: there are 12 million unemployed and the government estimates that this number may exceed 14 million by the end of the year; the cost of living has become unbearable, the number of families living on the streets is increasing every day, the number of students who have left the universities is growing; thousands of companies have already closed this year and several factories will suspend production.

Meanwhile, the biggest assault in the country’s history on the public treasury, the money of the nation, is continuing, with two of the biggest bankers occupying the Ministry of Finance (Henrique Meirelles) and the Presidency of the Central Bank (Ilan Goldfajn, one of the owners of the Bank Itaú). Just this year, the Brazilian government will pay 600 thousand million reales to the bankers, leading to chaos in public health system and the privatization of Brazil’s heritage.

But beyond having no legitimacy as it is the result of one of the most corrupt congresses in the history of Brazil, the Temer government is notable for the number of corrupt people who have posts in the ministries and in other senior positions. Surely 10 of the highest officials in the government are involved in the Lava Jato [Car Wash] operation or other corruption scandals.

To repress the people, the interim government of Michel Temer will use the infamous Anti-Terrorist Law, which considers anyone who participates in a political demonstration in the street a terrorist; for this, the subjective interpretation of the police and judicial system is enough. In an act of great irony, this is a law that was sanctioned by President Dilma Rousseff

Building the Popular Unity

Thus, this new political period will be characterized by violent clashes between the bourgeois state and the masses and by great repression of the popular leaders and the revolutionaries. Indeed, in three months, the Temer government showed that it represents what is most corrupt, reactionary and anti-national in Brazilian society. The measures it is trying to adopt range from the dismantling of the Unified Health System (SUS) and the privatization of health care, the collection of payments in the public universities, the increasing denationalization of the Brazilian economy; the increased spending on the Armed Forces, the cuts in funding for public housing, the increase in the length of the working day and the elimination of various workers' rights, the criminalization of abortion and the repression of strikes and trade union actions . It is waiting until after the municipal elections in October to adopt this package of negative reforms.

Therefore, the sooner we can defeat the Temer government, the sooner we will put an end to the suffering of our people. But so that this task does not stop half-way, it is essential to replace it by a genuinely revolutionary government, committed to people's power, to put an end to the rule of the monopolies and finance capital over the economy and to build a socialist society in our country.

Thus, it is essential to make the working masses, especially the working class, conscious of the fact that there is not and never will be a savior to do away with wage slavery, to give back the land to the millions of peasants and indigenous people and to nationalize our wealth.

Though this task will be difficult and require much effort, without it we cannot transform the dreams of our people into reality, we cannot eliminate wage exploitation and free our country from imperialist plunder and bourgeois domination. It is urgent, therefore, to take the political initiative and send activists to go to the neighborhoods and factories taking up our political proposal and presenting our program in order to get out of this crisis by summing it up in the slogan" Temer Must Go! For People's Power and Socialism.

*Central Committee, Revolutionary Communist Party – Brazil
September 2016*

Burkina Faso

Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta

About the self-defense groups “Koglweogo”

If there is one issue that arouses the news in our country, it is the self-defense groups “Koglweogo” which are developing their actions in a flash in the countryside in much of the country. The conscious forces of the bourgeoisie and part of the petty bourgeoisie condemn these groups, while the popular strata generally understand and support them in their struggle against the large-scale banditry and the insecurity in the countryside. The government, through the Minister of State in charge of security, tolerates them provided they become auxiliaries of the neocolonial state and take into account that force depends on law. The appearance and especially the development of these self-defense groups are linked to the development of the situation in the country.

Burkina Faso has been shaken by a profound revolutionary crisis characterized by a significant development of the popular struggles that involves all the popular social strata. These struggles, which are just and legitimate, express their thirst for justice, for a real change in their favor, a change for which they shed their blood in the popular uprising of October 2014 and in the victorious resistance against the fascist-type coup of September 2015.

The peoples of Burkina have become aware of their strength during the harsh struggles carried out for more than a decade, and particularly during the insurrectionary days of October 2014 and the victorious resistance against the fascist-type coup of September 16, 2015, and they are not willing to be ruled as before, because as they say “nothing will be as before.”

This is reflected by the fact that in recent months the main question has been the demands of the popular strata. These strata were previously oppressed and exploited without the slightest protest; they have learned to take charge of their existence, specifically by forming self-defense groups called “Koglweogo” that fight against insecurity and for justice.

What are the objective causes of the appearance of these self-defense groups?

- The failure of the neocolonial state and its inability to take up its “regalien role”¹. Indeed, one of the most important events in our country recently has been the insecurity in which the population lives, both in the countryside and in the cities. This lack of security has taken disturbing forms with the terrorist attacks carried out by the “jihadist” groups, of which the most deadly was the one carried out on Nkrumah Avenue in the capital, Ouagadougou, on January 15, 2016. The killings in cold blood perpetrated against the people by members of the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP) in the failed coup of September 2015, the attacks by these same elements against the Yimdi military camp, the many fires in the markets in several parts of the country, as well as the rise of banditry, is increasing the continuing insecurity in which the population in the countryside and cities lives. If the news of the attacks of the terrorists and elements of the RSP are disseminated by the mass media, the anguish of the rural population given their insecurity is scarcely made known. In many parts of the country roadblocks are set up by the big bandits who impose terror on the population, confiscating their meager goods, and sometimes purely and simply taking their lives. In regions such as East and the center North, for example, mafia organizations have established themselves that demand extraordinary taxes and various tributes from peasants, ranchers, small business owners and officials, all this with the impotence of the forces of defense and security and sometimes with the complicity of certain corrupt elements of these forces. The reasons for the development of the self-defense groups are due mainly to this dramatic situation.

- The inability of the security and defense forces to ensure the safety of the people and their goods in the whole country, the weak military logistics and contradictions and disagreements, are due to their undermining by the political and military clans within these forces. An important fact to consider is the methods are

¹ An archaic French term meaning security of the population and protection of their property, administration and defense of their territory.

used to defend the neocolonial power and its owners and not the population. The Presidential Security regime that controls the security of Captain Blaise Compaore has all the necessary means, while the units assigned to the security of the population and the territory are under-equipped.

The current government has acknowledged its failure and has called on the imperialist powers, particularly France, which occupies the country militarily, to, they claim, fight against terrorism. France also will increase its military presence to proceed with the development of the French “GIGN” [National Gendarmerie Intervention Group] in Burkina Faso.

- The failure of the judicial system has led to its losing all credibility among honest people. The National Forum on Justice of October 1998, and recently the Estates General of Justice, March 2015, have clearly demonstrated that loss of credibility

So far the justice system has not taken any concrete and meaningful measures to bring justice to the martyrs of the uprising and the resistance of September 2015, or to pursue and prosecute the perpetrators of the crimes of blood or the economic crimes.

- Lack of confidence of the population in the forces of Defense and Security, or in the judicial system, which they consider corrupt. The people have no hope of seeing impartial justice; the most serious economic crimes and crimes of blood are not prosecuted. The population sees the delaying maneuvers in order to try to bury the files by judges who trample on their oath, and they sell their souls for bags of money or simply for positions. Let us



remember the trial in the “Ousmane Guiro affair,” former General Director of Customs, who hid in the house of a member of his family trunks with millions of CFA (Central African) Francs, which shows perfectly that the current justice system is designed to ensure and secure the interests of the rich and powerful. Let us also remember the case of the mayors who participated in the most scandalous looting known in Burkina Faso, their intervention in real estate and the enrichment of people linked to the power. These predators, who had been imprisoned by the Transitional Government, were released one by one return to the power of their godfather. Thousands of millions (billions) of CFA francs were looted by the dignitaries of Power during the long reign of dictator Blaise Compaore, and were transferred out of the country with impunity (as revealed by the Council Of Ministers on March 16, 2016).

The bandits who are sometimes caught with the help of the population are often released without trial, and they return to mock, liquidate with impunity, or carry out reprisals against those who had denounced them.

As to the Forces of Defense and Security, one of the leaders of “Kolgweogo” expressed the sense of the population when he said: when we call the authorities for our security against the bandits and criminals, they tell us that they have problems of logistics, human resources, etc. But when it comes to crushing us and making us submit, they mobilize the police, the gendarmerie, the army, helicopters, etc. etc.

Thus, the self-defense groups have emerged as forms of organization and struggle created by the people to address the serious problem of insecurity, big banditry and to confront the great failure of the neocolonial state.

That is why they have popular influence, since they help the people, even if they sometimes commit “excesses” in their actions here and there, which does not in any way justify their dissolution. This also explains their rapid establishment in various towns, provinces and regions of the country, encompassing thousands of men and women.

Therefore, we must avoid falling into legal reasoning such as “force depends on law,” or their systematic condemnation and demand their outright suppression. These peoples prove that

when it comes to “white collar” criminals that are ruining and looting the country, the force does not depend on law. On the contrary, they use the law to protect them. The criminals who have murdered the martyrs of the uprising are protected by justice and law. Therefore, the people are eager to fight for their rights, to have the right to have a say about public administration, to play the leading role in their own history, for a real change in their favor. Given such a complex situation, going beyond formalism, it is very important that the democrats, progressives and revolutionaries become aware of the need to contribute effectively to the building of justice that really serves the population.

Through the efforts of the self-defense groups, the broad masses are showing their thirst for justice, their vital need for security for themselves and their meager goods acquired by the sweat of hard work; they are fighting for a new justice to serve the people, the opposite of the current justice that only serves the rich and powerful.

The spirit of the popular uprising of October 2014, reinforced by the victorious resistance against the coup of September 2015, is alive and the people are looking for way and means to put forward their urgent demands. They are creating new forms of organization and struggle that unite thousands of men and women of the people, and they are moving onto the field of struggle to improve their living conditions and for a real change.

The Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta (PCRv) welcomes the initiatives of the population of the countryside to organize and confront the inability of the neocolonial state, to ensure the security of the population and their goods, against the impunity that benefits the big bandits and criminals of all kinds.

The PCRv will spare no effort to help people organize themselves better, to raise their political consciousness and to fight together for a real change in their favor, for freedom and social progress. Historical experience shows that the working class and the people are their own saviors, and that thanks to the organized and conscious struggle under the leadership of the vanguard Communist Party of the working class.

Bread and Freedom for the People

Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta

Colombia

Communist Party of Colombia (Marxist-Leninist)

The Referendum and the Nobel Prize for Santos

Opening the pages of the journal *Unity and Struggle* to the analysis of various international events, we want this time to refer to two events that continue to fill the pages of the major newspapers around the world, the first referring on the results of the referendum held last October 2 and the second the Nobel Peace Prize that was just awarded to President Juan Manuel Santos.

The Referendum and its Results

Regarding the results of the referendum held this October 2, the following should be noted: 12,806,885 Colombians went to vote out of a total of 34,889,945 people on the electoral rolls. This means that only 36.7% of voters answered the call of the government and 63.29% abstained from voting. To the question: “Do you support the final agreement to end the conflict and build a stable and lasting peace?” there were 6,377,482 voters who supported the YES, that is 49.7% of voters; there were 6,431,376 voters, representing 50.2% of voters, who supported the NO, rejecting the Havana agreement.

Undoubtedly there are many readings of these results; in our case we will continue to insist that the analysis of the events should recognize a judicious and objective reading, such as our conception demands, the interests and aspirations of the proletariat. In this and all cases we must differentiate ourselves from those pragmatic and populist visions that, guessing even at the fate of the people, are unaware that our societies are witnessing an intense class confrontation, which is the product of various social and political interests and stakes in struggle.

A first substantial conclusion of this referendum stresses that peace in Colombia must recognize the broadest and most decisive participation of the various social and political sectors of the nation. As long as exclusions and short-sightedness predominate and the majority remains a silent partner in the discussion and

definition of the national problems, peace will remain the program and path of a small group to ensure their specific economic and political benefits; it will not be the peace of the majority of the country who seek substantial changes in both their standard of living and in the exercise of their rights and freedoms.

The campaign and the results of the referendum tell us that peace in Colombia is not the peace demanded by the government and the FARC-EP [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army]. A stable and lasting peace is of greater significance and greater content than the agreements reached in Havana. The peace demanded by the people and that Colombia wants demands that the state and particularly the Santos government open up and carry out a broad national dialogue involving, besides the institutions, all the Colombians, the different guerrilla organizations, political parties, trade unions and social organizations, peasants, youth, women and all the victims of a war that has already lasted more than 50 years.

The results of the referendum show that an agreement with the FARC-EP is not enough; an agreement is needed in which the ELN and the EPL [National Liberation Army and People’s Liberation Army, respectively] are also represented as organizations that took up arms, an agreement sufficiently debated by Colombian society so that changes that this society demands be secured by a system that effectively enables and enforces them. Thus, we can say that in addition to the clear and generalized rejection of the Havana agreements, Colombian society as a participant and not by a referendum spoke out in favor of an inclusive, participatory peace that takes into account the people’s rights and sovereignty.

For our Party a mathematical reading of the results is very important, but it cannot help noticing the contents, slogans, symbols and forms of participation both in the campaign and in the referendum itself, since by grasping them important conclusions can be derived about the state of mind, the popular consciousness, the actions in struggle, the political alternatives and proposals. In our analysis the referendum of October 2 highlights, promotes and affirms the need for a National Constituent Assembly with a broad democratic and popular content that expresses

the sentiment of the people for an inclusive, participatory and sovereign peace with social justice.

The analyses that declare Uribe the winner and Santos the loser depart from reality. In our opinion both are losers as both are advocates of the surrender and submission of the FARC-EP as well as all the guerrillas to the Legal Economic and Political Order that, as seen repeatedly, promotes exclusion and violence by the bourgeoisie, imperialism, their monopolies and institutions, against the people, their organizations and leaders. The people demand social justice and a Legal Economic and Political Order that makes possible and secures this.

The big losers are the FARC-EP, whom the people blame for their lack of loyalty and commitment to their popular interests and aspirations. The people reject their crimes, their war taxes and their rejection of a serious process that allows substantial changes in the country's life. The model of advanced democracy, the road of reforms and the prettifying of the establishment that the FARC-EP proposed did not receive the support of the people, because, as the spokespersons for the victims, the community leaders in the areas of greatest conflict and the leaders of important trade unions and social organizations state, the view is maturing in our organizations that the most diverse problems of the country cannot be solved easily; they demand profound and structural solutions.



Among the losers we cannot fail to note the poll-takers and all those media writers who with their flowery lies about the YES and NO wanted to put up a smokescreen over the real national problems. This is an important lesson for the proponents of the social networks when, overemphasizing their importance, consider that they are the ones who shape the consciousness and behavior of our communities; certainly they have some influence but they are not the ones who determine social change.

Let us note the effects of the results; we have an agreement such as the one in Havana that was not supported in the referendum and now has no legal or political validity; we have a FARC-EP that was defeated in the demobilization and disarmament process, without an amnesty or pardon that would allow the entry of their members and leaders into the civil and political life of the nation; and we have in the country the use of many smokescreens trying to re-legitimize the establishment; and certainly the uncertainty of many leaders and communities who do not see a clear picture in the continuity of the policies of aggression and war of the establishment.

Our Party reaffirms the need for a political solution to the conflict that supports those aspirations for dialogue and change that the people and their organizations have expressed. We reject calls for a National Agreement in defense of the Havana agreements or the so-called Social Pact which Uribe and the big-shots of the Democratic Center Party called for to defend the country's institutions. We revolutionaries understand that they are cards which today the bourgeoisie and its factions in power play to re-legitimize their apparatus of domination and to close the doors to a process of popular participation that would lead to the convening of a truly democratic Constituent National Assembly.

We will continue to push for a broad Political Front of the masses against the economic, social and political reforms that this government seeks to advance in order to deepen neoliberalism, exclusion and violence in the country; we will continue to promote the mobilization and struggles with which the National Civil Strike is being prepared and with the support and participation of the working class, the laboring people and the people we will continue fighting for a Sovereign and Democratic Country, insisting on changes that the majority of the country demand.

The Nobel Prize for Santos

This October 7 the international community heard the news of the award to Santos of the Nobel Peace Prize. The analysts do not tire of portraying Mr. Santos as a friend and a man committed to peace not only in Colombia but throughout the world. The tireless advocates of the Havana agreements say that the award represents the support by the international community for the dialogue with the FARC-EP, and there is no shortage of commentators who present the award as a recognition of Santos as the great defender of the victims.

They are wrong because, as we have been warning all the Colombians, Santos's peace is not the peace with social justice that the majority of the country demands. It is the Roman peace, the peace of subjugation and silencing of all who oppose the muzzling of democracy, lack of rights and freedoms.

The international community must recognize Mr. Santos as the man who promoted the inclusion of the country and its Armed Forces in NATO, the Group of Allies, those truly responsible for the massacres and genocide of the Syrian people. Under the orders of US imperialism they are the ones truly responsible for the war that is being promoted in all parts of the planet against the peoples who struggle for self-determination.

Those who think they can support the Havana agreements are wrong because in the Referendum of October 2 the people rejected those agreements. The National Agreement that the different forces of the establishment are now calling for, in addition to reviving the ill-fated moments of the National Front of Colombia of the 1960s, 70s and 80s, now well into the second decade of the 21st century have no other purpose than to re-legitimize the doctrine of National Security and the fight against terrorism under the guidance of the US. They seek to liquidate any expression of dissatisfaction with the neoliberal adjustment plans and the move towards fascism.

The victims of the war do not have in Santos their main defender; truth, justice and reparation for the victims have been the elements of justice achieved by the communities in struggle for an expansion of their rights and freedoms. Today the international community is forced to reject the massacres and genocide, the indiscriminate bombing, the violations of international humani-

tarian law, which have Mr. Santos as their main defender in the New Military and Political Doctrine of Subjection of the Colombian State.

We interpret the Nobel Prize for Santos as the prize that the imperialists bestow on a staunch defender of their order and his policies of exploitation and class oppression in this period of the exacerbation of the social contradictions and the agony of the capitalist system.

Before the international community we will not cease repeating that neither Obama nor Santos represent the peace to which the peoples of the world aspire. We call on the progressive and democratic organizations, parties, and people to reject this distinction awarded to Mr. Santos.

Communist Party of Colombia (Marxist-Leninist)
Central Executive Committee

October 7, 2016

Denmark

***Workers Communist Party of Denmark APK
Tine Spang Olsen***

Denmark: A NATO Country at War¹

Denmark is characterized as a little country with very close relations with the United States. We are members of NATO and the Economic Union, as well as in the Danish Realm with Greenland. We are a country that has participated in the US's and NATO's wars since 1990. We have been constantly at war since 2002.

The critical situation we live in makes it vital that we in the peace movement make NATO's rearmament and war preparations a central matter, because it is here where the greatest danger for war and even a third world war lies.

For many years the question of NATO membership has been mainly kept out of the peace movement. During the peace festival in Aarhus, in 2014, we marched through the streets with banners demanding Denmark Out of NATO. Such a demand had not been seen in demonstrations in many years. Yet many people thought this was a relief.

How Denmark entered NATO in 1949 – the Easter crisis

I will go back to the 1940s, because what happened then says a good deal about Danish politics. Denmark was sucked into NATO in 1949 by a propaganda coup. After the Second World War the Danish people were quite positive about the Soviet Union, and the general opinion was that the country ought to be neutral. Negotiations were underway for Nordic defence cooperation proposed by Sweden, hoping to form a neutral bloc. But that was not the US plan. The Atlantic Pact, later NATO, was part of the idea for a cold war against the Soviet Union.

Persistent rumours were widely circulated that the Soviets planned a forthcoming attack on Denmark. Suddenly things

¹ *Presentation during the Nordic Peace Talks, Degerfors Sweden, August 12-14, 2016 on the theme "NATO and the Nordic countries"*

happened rapidly. Norway signed the Atlantic Pact, soon followed by Denmark. Nordic cooperation and neutrality was scratched.

As Julius Bomholt, minister of Culture expressed it during a parliamentary debate:

“If we don’t say yes to the invitation of the seven free nations, our position will be unsure. We will have isolated ourselves, and we must be prepared for a new April 9.” (A reference to the Nazi day of occupation in 1940.)

However, joining NATO did not take place without opposition. In Copenhagen big demonstrations took place.

The next big question concerned atomic weapons. NATO’s strategy has been and continues to be based on atomic weapons, but since World War II opposition was so strong that NATO strategists engaged in duplicity. They did so, as well, to mollify the Soviet Union.

The Social Democratic government in the 1950s went into election campaigns on the basis of “Denmark without atomic weapons” and “Free from American troops”. Nevertheless, US rockets built to hold atomic warheads and American soldiers were located close to Denmark in Germany.

NATO’s strategy was based on an imagined Soviet attack that would be stopped by bombing in a zone above Denmark. They practiced the “scorched earth tactic” in flights so high above the country that no one was supposed to know what took place.

Greenland has special meaning for NATO, then and now

After the Second World War, NATO made Greenland a key location for the cold war by supplying the Thule Air Base with an advanced radar system and airport. It was a top secret that war planes were equipped with atomic weapons. This was exposed much later. Danish Social Democratic Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft made the deal in the deepest secrecy. That deception against the peoples’ interests was compounded by giving the US the right to Greenland’s uranium underground.

Officially, Danish governments have never allowed atomic weapons on Danish territory so a huge scandal unfolded when a US aircraft crashed in 1968 near the Thule Air Base with four

hydrogen bombs on board. Radioactive materials were spread over a large area.

Today, Greenland has home rule but its foreign policy is still under Denmark and so it is in NATO and US hands. Denmark now poses to Greenland a huge territorial demand on its Arctic underground, the size of Russia. Here there are huge mineral and oil deposits, and the area will have greater and greater strategic importance as the ice melts. The Arctic will be reprioritized in the future. There will be investments in satellite surveillance and more ships, and for the first time Greenland will have its own national guard inspired by Canada's ranger corps.

Denmark's wars

In the first week of August 2016, Denmark dropped its first bombs over Syria, as part of the coalition of the willing, bombing Syria and Iraq. Now the government says openly that it may be necessary to kill civilians in its hunt against the Islamic State.

Denmark has been and is an eager participant in wars—with troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, and later F-16 bombers plus Special Forces; in Libya F-16s and now a war ship; troops and war planes in Mali and South Sudan.

Denmark went to war against Iraq based on a lie fabricated by Liberal Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and in violation of international law. Instead of being charged with war crimes, he continued his career as NATO's Secretary General. Furthermore, the government-appointed commission that was to investigate the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq was stopped last year when the Liberal Party returned to power, forming a minority government.

That happened shortly before Anders Fogh Rasmussen was to be heard before the commission. Denmark has completely frozen any critical discussion of the wars and their consequences.

Anger was widespread among the population when the commission was shut down, and because of that a Tribunal Association was created in January with the motto: "We will investigate Denmark's wars since the Parliament will not". The association is working on creating a people's tribunal.

Coronation charter with the USA

In May, with the July 2016 NATO summit meeting in sight, the Nordic prime ministers met with President Barak Obama in the White House for a special dinner meeting. The five nations' leaders signed a "coronation charter" subordinated to US foreign policy, and they promised to steadily increase pressure against Russia.

The ministers competed for being the closest to the president and to obtain his greatest praise. Denmark Prime Minister Løkke Rasmussen appeared to be victorious.

Nordic cooperation will no longer be understood as an alternative to superpower policy but rather for the North to be a brick in NATO's rearmament. The coronation charter is frightening reading and everyone should study it.

The prime ministers agreed on:

--sharing the US's world view, and placing security and a stronger military at centre stage

--that world security is challenged by an aggressive Russia

--that NATO must be strengthened as well as provide greater security in the Baltic and with increased Nordic military cooperation



--that Ukraine's independence must be defended and sanctions against Russia must continue until it gives up its demand on the Crimea

A bilateral agreement between Denmark and Sweden will begin in January involving flights over each other's territory with armed warplanes, as well as naval ships. "That gives us more eyes and ears on Russia," explained Denmark's defence minister, Peter Christensen.

Denmark's rearmament

At the July NATO top meeting, Denmark was once again criticized by the US for having a small military budget. It was acknowledged, however, that the money that was allotted was used precisely for war participation and war preparations. And judging military expenses per citizen, Denmark is actually at the top, just below the US, Norway, England and France.

For the first time since the cold war, NATO will establish permanent bases in a line from the Baltic in the north to Poland in the south and perhaps Bulgaria later on—all as part of NATO's aggressive deployment against Russia. NATO's claim is that Russia is aggressive against Ukraine, but left out of this accusation is the fact that since the fall of the Berlin Wall most of the former Eastern European countries have joined NATO.

Furthermore, it was established at the meeting that Denmark would send troops to Estonia, thus doubling its numbers there to 200 to show its good will. With such action, Denmark is building upon its special imperialist tradition in the Baltic. As the legend goes, it was here that the Danish flag fell from heaven in the 12th century Crusades. And the Nazis in their time promised the Baltic lands to the Danish government as a reward for its cooperation under the occupation.

Missile Shield

Social Democrat Prime Minister Helle Thorning Schmidt came on board with NATO's missile shield at its 2014 summit. Officially, the shield is for protection from attacks by so-called rogue states. In reality, its function is to protect NATO countries so that they can be free to fire missiles without fear of being hit in reprisal, making the risk for war and atomic war in Europe even greater.

With the announcement of Denmark's participation in the shield, Russia's ambassador in Denmark expressed the possibility that Denmark could be a target for Russian atomic missiles. That statement was presented in the world's mass media as an atomic threat by Russia against Denmark, which NATO strongly denounced as proof of Russian aggression.

With Denmark aboard the missile shield we will be among NATO's craziest nucleus in this area, since only a few members are now participating—the US, Poland, Rumania and Turkey, and eventually Holland and Germany.

The military budget will increase with funds for new war planes

Recently Denmark's wars have mainly taken place from the air, and thus the matter of new war planes becomes important. Just before NATO's last summit meeting Denmark's government and parliament decided to buy the American F-35 war planes, which are built to be the first to attack behind enemy lines and to carry atomic weapons. The sale is not yet completed.

The matter of buying new war planes caused a rather extensive protest movement. The campaign is based on two issues: 1) No to Denmark's war participation; 2) Use war funding for welfare instead.

The anti-war movement and the welfare campaign go together without a doubt, and that combination meets great sympathy.

Denmark's membership in the EU

A special question has become urgent for the Danish peace struggle to take up: the EU.

The European Union is on the way to also becoming a military union. Many top EU leaders took part in the last NATO top meeting where it was decided that the two institutions should cooperate closely.

NATO and the EU set the scene for a future military division of labour while new developments are occurring inside the EU. A new strategic proposal foresees the EU as a military great power, together with NATO but also with its own power ambitions and greater worldwide influence.

The EU will no longer be based on “soft power” but will take military measures. Member countries that are ready for that can go forward and coordinate their military priorities jointly. Commercial agreements like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will work parallel with the EU and NATO, in order to secure economic and political power, and therefore it is called “the economic NATO”. TTIP is the European-US equivalent to the TPP—Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the CETA—Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement between Canada and the EU.

The EU, like NATO, is not a “peace project” rather a project for economic and military dominance and war.

**A very important point is:
What do we in the peace movement do?**

It is essential that we be a counterbalance to war propaganda running full force. We must be able to show precisely where the danger of war comes from: that NATO is preparing for war and not assuring peace; that war does not stop terror, on the contrary, it only creates more terror. We must bring together a great opinion that says STOP THE WARS and tackle the root of the evil.

We must make it clear for what role our land and the Nordic countries are intended—that Scandinavia and Europe generally can end up as a theatre of war, and that can lead to atomic war.

The danger of an **atomic war** will be an important question that can bring people together.

The question of NATO has always been central in the anti-imperialist part of the peace movement, but it has been pushed aside to a degree. The “war against terror” propaganda and the “necessity” of wars have been strong and have protected NATO.

Our peace movement must also show that the terror groups would have had spread little and had little effect if the West had not actively supported them with money and training, namely to use their existence as an excuse to carry on with war. Denmark has been active in starting the civil war in Syria by supporting the Friends of Syrian Group.

Recognition that Denmark is a country at war, and opposition to that, is certainly an advance. A lesson from last year—connecting the destruction of welfare that is taking place with the

fact that there is always ample investment for war, as we have shown in the campaign against buying new war planes—has received great support and is winning more ground.

Nordic Anti-War Cooperation

To those in other Nordic countries, we believe it would be quite positive if we could cooperate on some joint campaigns in the future. Just as you in Sweden and Finland struggle to stay out of NATO and get out of the NATO agreements underway we in Denmark must put our NATO membership on the table, and oppose the propaganda of the “necessity” of war. NATO is not a defence alliance, but an alliance for war.

I represent one of the Danish anti-war movements – the initiative “Stop the Terror War”. In view of the increased war danger in Europe we have added “Out of NATO” to our name. It is now ‘Stop the Terror War-Out of NATO’ (In Danish: Stop Terrorkrigen – Ud af NATO)!

We will focus on getting Denmark out of that alliance. In the Aarhus group, “Aarhus against War and Terror” we will also focus on that goal. We will take NATO’s rearmament up at our next peace festival in Aarhus, on Sunday, October 9 2016.

In recent years, opposition to the wars have not taken place in large demonstrations such as at the start of the war against Iraq. Yet in that whole period there has been much opinion against the wars and new war initiatives of late. There have been minor demonstrations and many street marches against Danish war participation. Comprehension is high that the wars are wrong, and that the destruction of Iraq, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan is the cause of the great flights of refugees.

That is that opinion that we work to strengthen, to bring together many more people in debates, actions and demonstrations.

As members of the war-crazy NATO and EU alliances we will be continuously sucked into new wars. A slogan and banner that could draw broad numbers into the peace movement and show an alternative to war could be:

For an independent Denmark, free of big power alliances – Out of NATO and EU!

August 2016

Dominican Republic

Communist Party of Labor

The Dominican People 55 Years after Trujillo's Tyranny Between the Rule of Law and Caudillismo?

Some intellectuals, including former leftists, have been promoting the idea that the Dominican people and the democratic sectors should not fail to take advantage of the fact that in the Dominican Republic the rule of law has been established. President Danilo Medina has shown himself to be a caudillo which has always been needed to pull the country out of its problems and propel it along the paths of development.

Just three weeks ago he began his second term in office, and there is already a campaign for him to run for a third term in 2020.

For these people, the “rule of law,” as stated in the present constitution of the republic, is the supreme aspiration of the Dominican people, and the caudillo is related to the Dominican idiosyncrasy as a historical necessity of its political and social process.

Such views, which seem to have a large place in the national academic and political debate, lead us to formulate ideas put forward years ago.

1. The main question.

The essence of the matter is that 55 years after the fall of the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, the transformation of the system is a pending task. That dictatorship fell as the result of an assassination on May 30, 1961, but the political system in the country has not changed much.

It is true that there are no horrendous crimes; there are no exiles or political prisoners, and an “electoral democracy” has been achieved, but without social justice it is one full of inequality. In fact, it is undermined by the dominance of a single party in all branches of the State, which has curtailed all the characteristics of a republic and placed the country under a presidential system that decides all the essentials of legislative and judicial activities.

After the fall of the Trujillo dictatorship, the U.S. government defined the “democratic transition” as it suited their interests. This policy stated that it would resort to a similar dictator if it saw the possibility of a revolution like the one led by Fidel Castro in Cuba.

After many political events, among them the taking to the streets by the people, the coup against the government of Professor Bosch in 1963, and the civil war in April of 1965, U.S. policy and its military imposed the regime of Joaquin Balaguer for 12 years. He resembled Trujillo but in other circumstances.

That regime suppressed the democratic and revolutionary sectors, and also divided them. It imposed a balance of forces that until today has been rather unfavorable to the popular sectors.

Here we are in an economic quagmire, in which 20 families allied to foreign interests control 90% of the national wealth; and in a political trap in which two parties win 95% of the votes cast in national elections.

Under Trujillo, one hand controlled everything; 55 years after his elimination, 20 hands still control everything. There is not much difference. The “democratic transition” directed by the U.S. government has kept the country in the same conservative structure.

Today, with the policy of convergence, mobilizing the broad masses in waves, we must resolve to move the country in the direction of the renewal of the ruling political, economic and social



system and the leadership that represents it, and thus open up prospects for the revolution.

We need to decide to change the conditions and means that have made it possible in the 21st century for the State to still be associated with the messianic personalities.

The Dominican nation, country and people must overcome as soon as possible anything that necessitates or justifies a Messiah, no matter whether of the left, center or right. That should have gone to the grave with Trujillo 55 years ago.

Let us focus well what is needed.

2. We need more than the “rule of law”

Democratic changes have been retarded and caudillismo, or the predominance of personalities, has survived for so long in our country that any elemental change in judicial rules is considered a significant step forward. The idea that “something is better than nothing” ends up dominating.

With the predominance of neoliberalism and of liberal democratic conceptions in the world, there began a process of privatization in our country led by the PLD [Party of Dominican Liberation] government. Corresponding to this, the so-called “first wave” of reforms to the institutions took shape.

Like almost everything in that process, the adjustments were recommended by the imperial powers. The laws and codes that resulted were “prefabricated.”

The most evident result is that the state is not resolving the problems of the people, and one cannot expect the market to resolve them; these problems are being increasingly aggravated. This is a major question at this time in the Dominican Republic, as in many other countries where the privatization program of the Washington Consensus has been imposed.

And thus, given the social damage that has been created, here as in many parts of the planet, they have sought and are seeking ways to “correct” the “errors” of that policy, and currents appear such as “neo-institutionalism,” which is just another recipe of the imperial power to cover up the problems of the market economy.

Let the laws be enforced! Let the contracts and regulations be made and fulfilled well! This is the demand of this form of neoliberalism that is neo-institutionalism.

It is nice idea that “the laws must be enforced and the rule of law respected” in the midst of a society in which corruption, crime and impunity prevail at all levels.

In this conception, as we said, it is nice in a country in disorder that many people are sympathetic to the idea of an “iron-fisted rule” and even that “we need another Trujillo.” Thus they do not fight against the privatization of public resources, nor against the handing over of the national patrimony to foreign capital; on the contrary, they are inherently linked.

In this conception what matters is that the law, or contracts, through which such transfers are made, are properly made and that the parties fulfill them. Let the governments adhere to them and enforce them. Nothing more.

The rule of law in the present circumstances is the neoliberal State of judicial security for what is already privatized, the investments and contracts in this context. It is part of the theory of the U.S. economist Douglas North on *Neo-Institutionalism*, for which he won the Nobel Prize together with Robert Forgel in 1993.

It is not a coincidence that the institutional reforms, and with those the constitutional reforms, were promoted by the World Bank once it considered that the predominance of the market after the privatization process in most of the planet was creating a new era.

The imposition of the market in the economy should lead to the corresponding institutions, to an appropriate State that would be the legal guarantor of that economic fact.

Historical materialism is right when it states that each stage of economic development leads to a corresponding legal and political stage. This is how Marx and Engels attributed the role of the bourgeoisie from when it was a subordinate class under feudalism until it became the principal one after the triumph of liberal bourgeois revolutions.

Thus, in the 1980s and the years following the International Monetary Fund (IMF) drew up and applied guidelines that led to the destruction of the public sector and established the market as regulator of the economy. It was left to the World Bank to create the conditions for the corresponding institutional reforms and to promote them. Joseph E. Stiglitz, who had been a senior official

of the World Bank, was one of the main promoters of this policy and in this he appeared to be distancing himself from the IMF readjustment policies. However, in reality, in his criticism he did not get to the bottom of the neoliberal process, the privatization of the public sector and liberalization of markets; he only criticized certain effects.

Thus he covered up for the World Bank in order to promote and point out the institutional changes in almost all countries.

The hallmark of this conception is that in many Latin American constitutions, and even governments that consider themselves alternatives, such as that of Rafael Correa in Ecuador, have promoted institutional changes in which social protest is criminalized, in order to create legal security for property and businesses.

The Dominican constitution, promulgated on January 26, 2010, claims to represent a new epoch in the country, and although it contains many interesting statements on democratic rights, whose implementation will depend on whether the people have the strength and willingness to guarantee them, this constitution is part of the neo-institutional conception that everything is subordinated to the “rule of law,” including the sale of natural resources whose privatization is legalized with constitutional standing.

Article 17, which refers among other things to the fact that “the non-renewable resources can only be exploited by private interests under grants, contracts, etc. under conditions determined by law,” makes it clear that public, national resources can be privatized, as long as this is regulated by law.

The basic question is whether they can be privatized or not. The constitution promulgated by Dr. Leonel Fernandez allows for privatization with the standing of substantive law. The rest are nice words to conceal that essence.

Before this article, article 15, referring to water resources, contains a paragraph that is, after all, where one finds the anti-popular, anti-national, content alienating the public sector, covered by the “rule of law” with constitutional force. That paragraph states, “the rivers, lakes, lagoons, beaches and the national coasts belong to the public domain and are freely accessible, always respecting the right of private property. The law regulates

the conditions, forms and rights under which private interests can use or administer these areas.”

The government has made some 600 concessions for exploration and mining, including areas near the major water basins of the country. They have also given concessions for coastal areas and beaches.

According to the constitution, the general formulation states that the people, for example, can have access to a lagoon or beach; but the particular law forbids it, and it does so under the same substantive law, which mandates that the conditions for access to property in the “public domain” are determined by that particular law.

Privatization has been legalized by the constitution. That is the change in the period expressed by the “rule of law,” conceived as a necessary institutional change at a time when the market dominates society.

Many of the ideas of Joseph E. Stiglitz, also of course defended by many who consider themselves alternatives, have to do with this “institutional change.”

Let there be no confusion. We are in favor of society living by rules. That there should be a culture of fulfillment of commitments, written or verbal. Chaos is only good for those who organize it, those at the top.

But above all, we are in favor of the people having material and psychological well-being. There should be well-paid jobs in quantity and quality. There should be freedom of association for the working class and laboring people to organize and demand better wages. Children and young people should be able to study, enjoy recreation and sports. The national heritage should serve the well-being of present and future generations. Taxes paid by the people should be used efficiently and effectively for quality public services. The State should guarantee quality public social security, with broad coverage.

That ideal society has to be won, because it does not exist in our country. This society must have its corresponding legal regulations, substantial and procedural, which still needs to be won.

The current “rule of law” is a set of laws, rules and contracts that legalize illicit enrichment, poverty for the great majority of the people, the exploitation of the labor power with low wages,

the handing over of the national heritage and productive forces to foreign capital. Finally, it provides legality to all the ills from which the Dominican nation and people are suffering. Therefore it is only good for those who do not to understand the basic question and who benefit from the present order of things.

Therefore, we must go beyond this “rule of law”, not demand it.

3. Caudillismo? Do We Still Need a Caudillo?

The caudillos were the political and military leaders who emerged in Latin America and the Caribbean after the formal proclamation of independence since the early 19th century. There is no agreement on a definition among those who have studied this question; they say that caudillos have existed at all times and in all societies, with common and different features. But they were still caudillos, because there has evolved around them a political regime that was almost always authoritarian, centralized, excluding, which was very typical of societies that were backward and lacked political consciousness.

In Dominican history, caudillismo is a legacy of the Spanish political culture. In colonial times, the Spanish governors often combined civilian and military functions.

In Latin American history there have been leaders of different shades, because they existed in different historical circumstances. Among many others, we find caudillos with a certain intellectual education, but they were essentially autocratic and conservative. As soon as the foundations of a capitalist economy were laid, caudillismo continued, but with new features. *Gradually the new caudillo became less rustic and changed his barbaric action for political astuteness; instead of large-scale violence, he appealed to the electoral processes that the new circumstances warranted.*

3.1 Why and how do we still run into caudillismo, including the populist variety, in Latin America? This is a question that must be answered.

In our opinion, the main reason is that the working class and laboring people in general have not yet achieved class independ-

ence and remain under the political and ideological influence of bourgeois forces that have the particular form of populism.

In developing this theme, we must say that the populism that we know in Latin America has little or nothing to do with the meaning of that term that we know from Russian populism in the early 20th century, the so-called People's Will or later the Social-Revolutionaries, who were criticized in Lenin's works.

Some people who have studied this have tried to explain it as a manifestation of the traditional sectors that were skipped over or left behind in the modernization of the economy.

Others explain it as the political behavior of urban sectors for which the media have created consumption needs; therefore they join the organizational and political struggle and thus look for someone important or a powerful organization to lead them.

Another explanation of populism, but very focused on economics, is the one that certain dependency theorists (Fernando Henrique Cardoso, for example) give. According to them, populism is a political expression of the import substitution model that existed at a certain period in Latin America, in which a certain redistribution of income was proposed and the so-called national industrialization appeared, which ultimately ended up being dependent on foreign goods and technology.

However, reality, practice, on the basis of which theory should be generalized, says is that *the populist movements have*



been, and largely are, a multiclass mixture under the hegemony of a bourgeois leadership with a discourse that is sometimes nationalist, but which generally does not question the fundamental bases of foreign domination.

Some populists have come to theorize about the benefits of the penetration of imperialist capital. For example, Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, the founder of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) of Peru, said that imperialism was beneficial for countries such as those of Latin America, because their investments accelerated the development of the productive forces there. Almost everyone who was part of the same current as APRA said the same thing: Professor Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic, Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela, Pepe Figueres in Costa Rica, to cite only a few examples.

What has generally been observed in this part of the Americas is that populism is a political movement that influences a variety of organizations with an important popular base of support, led by the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie, through a charismatic figure who makes himself a caudillo.

Upon coming to power, this type of movement claims to represent all the people, ignoring questions of class. In fact, the caudillo in office claims to be above classes, although he governs in defense of the fundamental interests of the bourgeoisie, and so he has conflicts with sectors of this class; because he cannot equally serve all sections of the bourgeoisie.

The very fact that *with this Bonapartist attitude the populist caudillo enters into contradiction with some section of the bourgeoisie helps him to cover his class character before the broad masses, leading them to see him as one of their own.*

It cannot be ruled out that the populist movement in power may take some small measures that will affect some of the interests of imperialism, and even make major concessions to the popular classes, including the working class and laboring people; but it always takes care that the fundamentals of bourgeois and imperialist rule prevail. This is what is happening in some way today with the so-called alternative governments.

4. What now?

More than five decades after the fall of the caudillo Trujillo, in Dominican society the need is raised for another caudillo so that the people and country can overcome their problems.

Thus, for the PCT the task is still posed of providing the working class and laboring people in general with a real option for change. This is a needed step so that they may win their class independence and join their class party in the determination to free themselves from exploitation.

And, in the perspective of democratic changes and of the broad, popular, progressive and leftist political force of a united front character that is necessary for this, the following questions are relevant: Do we dedicate ourselves to seek, or form a caudillo? Do we devote ourselves to a process of social and political struggle from which leaders emerge? Do we build a collective leadership, in unity and democracy, of the various sections of the progressive movement?

These are questions that need answers, but in any case, we must find them in the midst of a process of political and social struggle that challenges the current political and legal order, while it fights for immediate gains for the working class, laboring masses, and the broad masses in general.

Any discussion or theoretical formulation that departs from this practical question is an activity for dilettantes and not for revolutionaries, much less for communists.

September 2016

Ecuador

***Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador –
PCMLE***

Pablo Miranda

Freedom and Democracy – Demands of the Workers and Peoples

I

Freedom and democracy are principles and values that have a historical significance. In class societies they are an expression of the ideology of the different social classes, especially those competing for their material and emotional interests. This means that one cannot speak of freedom and democracy in abstract terms.

Freedom and democracy have different meanings and validity in specific historical periods.

In the primitive community freedom and democracy were the natural expression of its members; there were no material differences that they faced; men and women joined together for hunting and gathering, equally sharing the results of their work. They worked collectively and distributed the product among all of them.

When surpluses appeared in agriculture and herding, the primitive community began to disintegrate and social differences arose, the community works while a small group manages production, later it appropriated the products and willed them to their offspring. In this context freedom and democracy were no longer the heritage of society; they became the privilege of the groups in power that later became the class of slave-owners.

Feudalism is by itself the denial of freedom and democracy; it is an expression of absolutism. Economic and political power is exercised by the lords and nobles; the broad masses of serfs, artisans and workers do not have any kind of rights, except to work for the lords and receive a share of the product for their subsistence. Freedom and democracy are only rights of the lords and the absolute monarchy.

Under capitalism and its highest stage, imperialism, despite the statements and words in the constitutions that speak of free-

dom and democracy as inherent expressions of the system, they in practice deny those rights to the vast majority of the population who are part of the laboring classes, the subordinate, dominated classes.

In capitalist society, freedom and democracy, equality before the law and justice are fully the rights of the bourgeoisie. The various groups of the ruling classes enjoy the economic power that comes from being owners of the large means of production and holders of political power that they wield as they please through the institutions. The working masses and people have access to crumbs of the freedom and democracy proclaimed in the Constitution and laws. In essence they have the freedom to sell their labor.

II

Capitalism is the expression of the domination of capital over labor, of the bosses over workers, the exploitation of the labor power of millions of people in all countries, the appropriation of the wealth created by the working class by a minority group of owners of the means of production. It is the domination, plunder and looting of the natural resources and raw materials by the large international monopolies and imperialist countries, the degradation and destruction of nature for the accumulation and concentration of wealth.

For its reproduction, for the accumulation and concentration of wealth, capitalism needs to legitimize its system, its ideology and its thought. Coercion and repression are not enough.

To legitimize these conditions, the capitalist class built up through revolution and regressive wars the so-called representative democracy which it promotes as the ideal of freedom and democracy.

Representative democracy feeds the fiction of representation through elections, it proclaims that political power and the government are born from the majority expression of millions of human beings who have the "right to elect and be elected." It shows pluralism through the existence of various political parties that express the interests of various economic groups into which the capitalist class is subdivided. It proclaims the alternation of parties in the exercise of government, the division of powers among

the executive, parliament and judiciary. Representative democracy is shown as the highest expression of freedom.

Universal suffrage, pluralism, alternation of parties and the division of powers are effectively in force for the big business owners and bankers, for the monopolies, for the electoral businesses. The workers, the peoples, those on the bottom take part in the process of representative democracy as electors of the big political parties, manipulated by the various promises that are made in the election campaigns. Elections call on the workers from time to time to decide which sector of the ruling classes should become the government in office. The elections under representative democracy affirm the political domination of the propertied classes, the manner of confronting and resolving the contradictions among the ruling groups.

III

The working class and the other laboring classes, the creators of wealth are the dominated, exploited and oppressed classes; they are also classes antagonistic to the bosses and the bourgeois state. The proletariat is the main protagonist of the anti-capitalist confrontation, the class that has the ideological and political ability, the historical responsibility to lead all the people to overthrow the capitalist-imperialist world.

In the tireless battles waged by the working class in opposition to the exploitation and oppression of the bosses, against the bourgeois state and its institutions they have achieved significant gains and rights: the freedom of organization, the right to strike, freedom of expression, the right to make demands, freedom of thought and the right to fight for their ideals.

These important public and democratic freedoms are an important space and expression for the development of the economic struggle, for the winning of the rights of the workers and peoples, for the defense of human rights, for the confrontation with imperialist domination, for the momentum of the political struggle, for the process of the accumulation of revolutionary forces. These circumstances require the proletarian revolutionaries, the democrats and patriots, the trade unionists and other social activists to fight by all means to preserve and expand democracy and freedom.

The struggles for the preservation of freedom and democracy are being waged in different social and political conditions; they confront fascism, military dictatorships, reactionary and authoritarian governments, developmentalist and reformist regimes and demagoguery and populism.

The stages of freedom and democracy that exist in capitalist society are directly related to the strength of the trade union organization, to the ability of the workers to fight. In some countries these freedoms have greater significance, in others they are restricted. In certain circumstances in those countries, those rights are limited and restricted. These expressions are the result of the development of the class struggle, of the confrontation between the exploited and the exploiters, as well as the intensity of the contradictions among the bourgeoisie.

IV

Whatever the form of political domination of the capitalist class, the essence of the system is the same. The state is the instrument for the domination of the bourgeoisie over the working class and other laboring classes. The constitutions, laws and institutions, despite the pompously worded statements, guarantee the existence of the private ownership of the means of production, the appropriation of the wealth created by the workers for the employers, the freedom of association and trade for the big bankers and bosses, for the monopolies. Those same institutions ensure that the working class can subsist and have the ability to sell their labor power.

“The forms of domination of the state may vary: capital manifests its power in one way where one form exists, and in another way where another form exists – but essentially the power is in the hands of capital, whether there are voting qualifications or not, or whether the republic is a democratic one or not – in fact the more democratic it is the cruder and more cynical is the rule of capitalism.” Lenin (The State).

The class struggle is a law of social development. Since the appearance of social classes those below have confronted the rulers, the exploited against the exploiters, the peoples against imperialism. The forms of the class struggle have to do with the specific historical conditions.

The working class and its party, the Marxist-Leninist communist party, puts forward the strategic objective of fighting for the abolition of social classes, for the disappearance of social inequality, for communism, for full freedom and democracy for all humanity.

V

The struggle for these great objectives of the proletariat and its party is waged every day and in all fields, in the economic, ideological, cultural, military and political spheres. It develops confronting the capitalist class, which has established its Constitution and laws, which has set up institutions that defends its interests to the very end, which in essence has the ability to impose concrete historical conditions.

We communists do not have the ability to “create” ideally the conditions for the development of the revolutionary struggle. We must organize and make the revolution according to the objective conditions. These conditions exist independently of people’s will. Clearly we are fighting to radically change those conditions. To raise the working classes to be the ruling classes, to assume with them the role of leaders of the new society.

We strive to place ourselves at the head of the working class in its fights for trade union freedoms and labor rights, we organize and participate in the strike struggle, we fight for the right of the peasants to own the land in order to work it; we are present in the struggles of the self-employed workers, we are with the teachers in the fight for their demands, we fight with the secondary and university students for their rights and aspirations, we take up the national and cultural struggle of the indigenous peoples and nationalities, of the blacks of Ecuador, we oppose the extraction of natural resources and we fight for public education, for health care and social security.

We have been fighting since our emergence in the country’s life for freedom and democracy; we have confronted military dictatorships, authoritarianism and demagogic and populist regimes, developmentalism and reformism. We were together with millions of Ecuadorians in the popular uprisings that overthrew the corrupt governments of Bucaram, Mahuad and Gutierrez.

We proletarian revolutionaries as well as hundreds of revolutionaries and revolutionary social activists have been victims of repression, persecution, prosecution, prison and assassination.

Our valiant comrades and friends have fallen victim to the bullets of various bourgeois regimes that we have confronted.

These battles have steeled the party, but they have also contributed to clarifying things, to its ability to recognize the class nature of the government in office, to its skill in being able to determine the objective and subjective conditions of each period in the class confrontation.

VI

We the people, the working class, the progressive intelligentsia, the leftists and revolutionaries and the communists have been participating in the elections organized by the ruling classes. We do this conscious of the fact that we will not seize power in this way. We are trying to spread our programmatic proposals, to win the working masses and youth for revolutionary politics; we are contending with the bourgeoisie for the present and the future of the popular will.

The electoral struggle allows us to take advantage of the conditions to put forward our politics, to advance in the process of the accumulation of forces.

The participation of the communists in the elections under representative democracy is not for the express or implied purpose of legitimizing the class rule of the bourgeoisie; in the same way the unions and the strike struggle is not meant to legitimize the exploitation and oppression of the bosses over the workers. These forms of class struggle represent the immediate, medium-term and strategic interests of the workers and peoples.

Through elections, but above all, through the strike struggle for our demands and demonstrations, through the strength of the social organization of the workers and peoples, we democrats and patriots, the revolutionaries and communists have been able to realize, in the constitutions and laws, important rights and freedoms, such as the right to trade union organization, to make demands, the right to strike, to freedom of expression. However, for those rights to be relevant, the participation and actions of the workers and revolutionaries is necessary.

Representative democracy, at the same time as it legitimizes the political domination of the bourgeoisie, ensures its economic interests. However this is not enough to preserve those privileges; when the popular struggle is growing, if the contradictions between groups cannot be overcome, the capitalist class resorts to all kinds of measures, it violates its constitution and laws, it gets rid of its own representative democracy and establishes military dictatorships. The history of capitalism shows these different forms of the economic and political domination of the bourgeoisie: the presidential republic, parliamentary republic, constitutional monarchy, military dictatorships, populism, fascism and Nazism.

The workers and peoples have always fought for freedom, social justice, democracy and human rights. Many of these principles have become effective to the degree that social organization is relevant and demand their fulfillment.

VII

The bourgeoisie proclaims freedom and democracy by all means, it proclaims – and in this it is right – that it is the sworn enemy of socialism and communism.

The capitalists have built an ideological and political framework that has been instilled in the minds of the workers and peoples. This platform comes from the past, from the rule of the slave-owners and has been perfected under representative democracy.

Above all, bourgeois institutions require for their government the legitimacy provided by the will of millions of voters expressed at the polls. In this view the highest expression of freedom and democracy is elections; in practice, it is the only form fostered and tolerated by the ruling classes.

It is a fact that we must recognize that this ideological and political trap of the capitalist class has allowed it to maintain its rule and to a good degree to legitimize it.

All bourgeois constitutions proclaim this dogmatic statement: that power emanates from the people, from their majority will; that the ones who rule are the workers; that the bourgeois government represents the interests of the majority of the population; that political stability is the guarantee of governability.

These principles have a temporary validity in most countries and most concrete historical circumstances. But when the threat to their political rule due to the development of the struggles of the working masses and or when the group contradictions within the bourgeoisie cannot be resolved by means of elections, this same class of capitalists or one of its groups violate the Constitution and laws, they provoke coups and establish military dictatorships.

The legitimacy of representative democracy, of the bourgeois governments is a reality that is affirmed or denied in the defense of its class interests. It is not a matter of an intangible, ethereal condition; it is a concrete question, the result of the development of the class struggle.

VIII

Universal suffrage, which is essentially a democratic gain of the workers and peoples, is also the way to exclude the will of the voters.

In the great majority of capitalist countries, the form of organization of the political struggle for power is waged through political parties.

These political parties express the interests of the different sectors into which the ruling classes are divided and subdivided. There are also political parties that represent the interests of the middle classes and strata, of the reactionary petty bourgeoisie and



of sectors of the-radicalized petty bourgeoisie. The workers also form political parties that represent them; since the dawn of its appearance the working class has organized into unions and built its own political party, the communist party.

The bourgeois political parties, regardless of their shading or program, represent the economic interests of the various groups of the ruling classes. All of them use the elections, the bourgeois institutions, the Constitution and laws to preserve and extend their privileges, primarily and above all, the right of private ownership of the main means of production.

In the electoral political struggle that is waged on various occasions, the bourgeois political parties generally confront each other; in some countries, these contests are polarized into so-called two-party system, between two big expressions of the bourgeoisie. The electoral rules, despite what they claim, restrict the rights and aspirations of the small parties, of the parties of the workers, of the parties of the revolutionary left. They force them to act according to the rules for the perpetuation of the capitalist system. The system of distribution of seats favors the large parties and restricts and sometimes eliminates the chances of electoral victory for the small parties, of the political organizations of the workers. In Ecuador, thanks to the El Hont method of distribution of seats, Rafael Correa's party won more than 70% of the seats in parliament with 50% of the votes.

On the other hand, these electoral confrontations unfold to extraordinary degrees; in the imperialist countries they cost thousands of millions of dollars and in other countries they cost tens and hundreds of millions. The bourgeois political parties with decades of existence and those that arise from the new conditions are organized as real companies; the owners of these parties are the major economic groups of contributors and their managers are the party leaders, the presidents and parliamentary representatives. Each electoral campaign is an economic, ideological and political confrontation among the big business owners and bankers. The voters, the people are the ones who settle the contradictions among those groups. The elections that will take place at the end of 2016 in the United States make these circumstances abundantly clear. Thousands of millions of dollars are spent to determine which figure will lead the destiny of the country, each of

whom proclaims to the four winds that they will defend democracy and freedom.

These costs and the size of the election campaigns cannot be met successfully by the parties of the workers, by the party of the proletariat.

IX

The political confrontation in the field of bourgeois democracy can be broken by the political repression of the working class, of the democratic and patriotic sectors and the progressive intelligentsia. In the 20th century in several countries in Europe and Latin America the political forces of the workers and peoples achieved important gains and rights, they won important places in the bourgeois parliament and from these positions they pushed for more democratic legislation for the benefit of the workers and for national sovereignty. These achievements were the result of the strike struggle, of the popular demonstrations in the cities and the countryside, of the great strikes and uprisings and, of course, of important electoral victories.

X

So far during the 21st century, mainly in Latin America there emerged through elections governments that were different from the traditional ones, which claimed to be progressive and some to be revolutionary. These regimes mostly proclaimed “21st century socialism.” The government of the Workers Party in Brazil was less promising; it contented itself with proclaiming the independent development of the country and the slogan of “zero hunger.”

These formations claimed to have found a new way for the revolution, for freedom, democracy and socialism, an emancipatory project that would resolve the material and emotional problems of the working masses, that would overcome capitalism, establish social justice, diminish the chasm of poverty without affecting private property, respecting the rights of all.

After more than a decade and despite the economic boom that meant high prices for raw materials, minerals and oil for Latin America, these governments are immersed in an economic crisis that is destroying their limited material and social achievements. They are infected, like other bourgeois governments on

the continent, by corruption, by the personal use by their leading representatives of huge amounts of public money.

They failed in their attempt to resolve the problems of the workers and peoples, to safeguard national sovereignty, to develop the country independently.

This political project that claimed to be anti-neoliberal reaffirmed the chains of dependence on imperialism, it guaranteed huge profits for the big business owners and bankers, it promoted the modernization of the capitalist system. The social achievements of which they boasted only mitigated the extreme poverty of the population; the workers continue to be chained to wage slavery.

Once again, it has been proven historically that only the working class can lead the social revolution to the end, it is the only class that, by building people's power, can confront and resolve the liberation of the oppressed and the independent development of the country.

XI

Today, when the “progressive governments” have been unmasked before the working people as forms of capital, when they are faced with the demands for freedom and democracy, like all bourgeois governments of all times and countries, they proclaim the legitimacy that the will of the workers gave them one day as expressed at the polls. They use the fetishism of universal suffrage. They proclaim legitimacy based on law. As a consequence of their electoral victory they consider themselves untouchable.

They claim that all who oppose their anti-popular and anti-national measures are trying to return to the past, they want to destroy their “social work,” their highways and bridges.

In the same framework of representative democracy the legality that the elections produce is temporary; it becomes illegitimate when they are mired in corruption, when they attack the social organization of the workers, when they attack the environmentalists and communities that oppose the extraction of natural resources, when they violate human rights, when they persecute social activists, imprison and assassinate them, when they attack and condemn the revolutionary left.

When tyranny and corruption are expressed in the administration of the bourgeois governments, the legitimacy that they obtained one day as a result of the elections fades, it disappears; they show themselves openly as tools of the ruling classes to ensure their interests and privileges.

The history of Latin America in particular, the events of the new millennium show clearly the legitimacy of the popular struggle in defense of freedom and democracy, of human rights, of the open confrontation with corruption, of the repudiation of the bourgeois regimes. In Brazil at the end of the last century, in Ecuador, in Bolivia, in Argentina and recently in Guatemala the working masses, youth, the indigenous peoples and nationalities went into the street and overthrew various bourgeois governments for being corrupt, authoritarian and inept. It would occur to no one who has any political understanding to call these popular movements coups.

XII

The struggle of the working masses and peoples, of the youth, of the political formations of the left and the communists are showing a period of sustained rise that can and must lead to an upsurge in the struggle of the masses and contribute to the organization and consciousness of the working class in the process of accumulation of revolutionary forces.



This rise in the mass struggle is unfolding in all the countries of Latin American, on all continents and in all regions. Gone are the days of an ebb in the struggle.

In Argentina the working class, peasants and youth are valiantly fighting against the bourgeois regime of Macri, they are opposing the neoliberal adjustment programs. In Brazil there have been large demonstrations against the measures of the bourgeois government of Temer that is trying to place the entire burden of the crisis on the backs of the workers. In Chile, the workers and students are repudiating the policies of the bourgeois government of Bachelet. In Mexico millions of people are fighting corruption, state terrorism, repression and assassination carried out by the bourgeois government of Peña Nieto. In Colombia the working class, the peasants and the student youth are repudiating the neoliberal policies of the bourgeois government of Santos.

These manifestations of the popular struggle are developing unevenly, they are calling for the satisfaction of the immediate interests of the workers and youth, but they are largely aiming at the responsibility of the bourgeois government, they are assuming a political character. Obviously these mobilizations have limitations. Among them are the lack of a revolutionary course that points to the system and the weaknesses of the revolutionary party of the proletariat.

The struggle of the masses that is taking place in Latin America, despite its limitations, is a new stage in the confrontation between labor and capital, between the workers and the bosses, between the peoples and imperialism; it is part of the revolutionary process.

XIII

It is clear that the important mobilization of the masses in Brazil condemning the corruption of the Workers Party and the social contingents that are taking to the streets in Venezuela demanding responses to the crisis, demanding food and health care and are confronting the regime of Maduro are being manipulated by the ultra-reactionary bourgeoisie; they are supported by U.S. imperialism.

These mobilizations are supported by millions of discontented, dissatisfied workers and youth; by these actions they are supporting the acts of reaction, with its ability to manipulate the perception of the masses. It is a matter of just demands which should be guided by the revolutionary forces and the forces of the left. The party of the proletariat must contend for these popular social sectors against the ideological and political manipulation of the bourgeois opposition, the right and imperialism.

We communists must strive to develop correct policies that bring together the aspirations of the working masses and youth, to take these proposals to those who are dissatisfied. We must not leave the banners of freedom and democracy, of respect for human rights, of the struggle against corruption to the various political forms of the bourgeoisie. It is indispensable to devise a policy independent of any sector of the ruling classes; it is necessary that these orientations take hold in the minds of the masses, of the social organization and struggle.

One cannot say that the acts of corruption that are being denounced should be overlooked because they are committed by representatives of the “left,” because they are actions carried out by people elected by the popular will. One cannot be indifferent to the demands of millions of people who need food and medicine; one cannot exonerate those responsible for this situation by the fact that they are self-proclaimed “revolutionaries,” that they have been elected by the majority.

XIV

The great demonstrations in the cities and countryside that developed in 2015 in Ecuador were genuine expressions of the will of the trade unionists, of the popular organizations, of hundreds of thousands of Ecuadorians, of the organizations and parties of the left, of the party of the proletariat.

They were in the streets in response to concrete needs, they were fighting for freedom and democracy against the authoritarianism and corruption of Correa’s government. They openly demanded “**Get Out, Correa, Get Out!!**”

The response of Correa’s government was to describe them as ones who are destabilizing democracy, playing the game to the bourgeois opposition, the right and imperialism. Throughout his

tenure in government he set up the judicial machinery that he controls and criminalized the protests, he persecuted, imprisoned and condemned hundreds of social activists.

He railed at the popular struggle as the prelude to a “soft coup,” as part of a conspiracy to overthrow a government legitimately elected by the Ecuadorians.

According to the regime, one can protest peacefully, within the framework of the law, by asking permission. To a great degree these demonstrations were peaceful expressions that were nevertheless harshly repressed. The Correa government strengthened its ranks with members of youth gangs, the *Ñetas* and Latin Kings, using them as shock troops to oppose them to the popular mobilization.

These demonstrations of the working masses and youth are continuing, but now they are engaged in the electoral contest. The next general election confront the intentions of the Correa government to continue in power, the various forms of the bourgeois opposition and the democratic and leftist project that is present in the race, they put forward a definite alternative in favor of the interests of the workers and peoples.

Facts show that the Correa government lost the legitimacy that the election gave him, when he betrayed his program and placed himself at the service of U.S. and Chinese imperialist domination, when he oriented his administration to the service of the big business owners and bankers, when he attacked the popular and indigenous organizations, when he repressed the trade unionists and environmentalists, when he persecuted and imprisoned the social fighters and revolutionaries.

We the working masses, the youth, the indigenous peoples and nationalities, the political parties and organizations of the left, the Marxist-Leninists are completely right when we confront the tyranny and corruption of Correa’s government, when we fight for freedom and democracy for those below, for the people.

XV

The ideologues and spokespersons of the “progressive governments,” the opportunists of all shades and some confused leftists and social activists accuse the workers and trade unionists, the revolutionaries and communists of being tools of the right and

imperialism, of reaction and the CIA because we fight for the freedom and democracy trampled on by those regimes. Some call us politically shortsighted because supposedly we do not correctly see the nature of these governments, because we do not understand that they are charting a new path for the process of social and national liberation.

These assertions are false; they do not correspond to reality. In the case of the opportunists, bureaucrats and lackeys of the “progressives” regimes they are expressions of bad faith, they aim to preserve their interests, and the privileges from which they profit.

We communists analyze the correlation of forces from the immediate and mid-term interests of the working class, from the Marxist-Leninist conceptions; we take into account words and deeds, proposals and practice.

We start from the position that whatever the form of government in office, whatever the platform and administration of the various parties of the bourgeoisie, they always express and defend the interests of domestic and foreign bosses, they are useful for the system.

Starting from this premise we understand that there are ideological and political differences between one bourgeois government and another. We know and have confronted neoliberal policies, reactionary and authoritarian governments, military dictatorships, developmentalist and populist regimes and reformist administrations.

In each case, the essence of the policy of the revolutionary party of the proletariat has not changed; it has always been on the side of the interests of the workers and peoples, it has defended the validity of civil liberties and democracy. Clearly we communists see the nature of government we are confronting: in the face of the reactionary regimes we do not hesitate to develop and lead the popular opposition; when demagoguery and welfare practices lead the government administration we demand the deepening and expansion of these measures for the benefit of the masses, we develop the policy of demands; when reformist policies are in government we support whatever is in favor of the workers, we always support those measures that benefit the people; when the government promotes measures against dependence, in opposi-

tion to imperialist interference, we support them; when the regime changes course, when it violates the social and political rights of the working masses, when it prostrates itself before imperialist capital, we take up the popular opposition directly and consistently, consistent with the interests of the working class.

These policies have a revolutionary nature, they correspond to taking positions in concrete conditions; they are forms of tactics. As such they are subordinate to strategy, to the immediate and medium-term task of the accumulation of revolutionary forces.

Ecuador, September 2016

France

Workers' Communist Party of France – PCOF

On the social movement in France for the repeal of the El Khomri law

Introduction

Throughout half of 2016, our country has been the scene of an unprecedented worker and popular social movement to demand the repeal of a so-called “labor law,” the “El Khomri law,” named after the minister who introduced it.

This movement has generated much interest in the international political and trade union movement, particularly in Europe; it was marked by several demonstrations of solidarity (in Italy, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, etc.)

Here we will try to explain its causes and characteristics, and how this movement has shown a maturity and a rise in the consciousness of the workers, trade unionists, progressive strata and part of the intelligentsia.

The content of this law

First we need to recall that the content of this law has just been promulgated in the *Official Gazette* on August 9, 2016. This law aims to reform the labor code to remove a number of barriers to further exploitation of the labor force. In accordance with EU directives, this law would further liberalize the labor market to allow employers to more easily obtain the maximum profit. This is the meaning of all the reforms that the Hollande government has undertaken since the start of his five year term, in line with those carried out by previous right-wing governments.

But what is new in this law, the steps it is meant to carry out and what is at its heart, is the transformation of the rules of “social dialogue” in the world of labor. This is to push aside the class struggle unions in favor of a one-to-one dialogue between the boss and the worker within the company, in a balance of force that is more unfavorable to the workers. The objective of this law is to break trade unionism as it still exists in our country by

bringing it closer to “German” model of trade unionism with unions integrated into the state apparatus.

For, apart from particularly harmful articles such as facilitating layoffs, one article concentrates the essence of this law, by allowing employers to implement agreements that are weaker than the provisions laid down by the law or by collective agreements in that sector, especially those which affect the labor time (daily, weekly, annual, holiday schedule, etc.) and overtime pay. Indeed, our [current] labor law contains the principle of hierarchy of norms by which the law is above sectoral agreements, which are above company agreements. Added to this is the “favorability principle,” which means that the text that is applied is the one that is most favorable to the worker. But the labor law aims to overturn the hierarchy of norms and establish the company agreement as the one that becomes law. The El Khomri law in effect stipulates that “the primacy of the company agreement on labor time becomes the principle of the common law.” This article is accompanied by another significant change: the ability of minority unions in the company to hold a referendum on issues of labor time.

This law makes a major change with very serious long-term consequences for all workers. As we wrote in an article in our newspaper *La Forge* in March, 2016, in “the company agreement, it is the boss who makes **his** law in **his** business.” For behind this reversal of the hierarchy of norms (the law and the sectoral agreement after the company agreement – therefore abandoning the favorability principle), there is a new unionism that they want to impose, one that relegates the majority union in the company, which would not bend to the employer’s will, in favor of the organization of a company referendum where the worker will now be alone, without the balance of forces, before the voting booth under the employer’s blackmail.

Why was the government so insistent to pass this law?

Many people have wondered why the government persisted despite strong opposition of the workers and people. Several explanations have been advanced. For our part we believe that the reasons are first and foremost ideological and political rather than economic.

Certainly, the productivity gains and increased profits expected by the employers from this law will not be negligible, far from it, and in times of economic crisis these are important. But even more than economic benefits, the main objective of this law is to break the ideological control of the necessity of the class struggle in favor of a class collaborationist unionism, which follows the boss, such as the one that the CFDT [French Democratic Confederation of Labor] developed throughout the conflict. Added to this is the desire to demonstrate at all costs that the workers' and popular movement cannot force the government to retreat. This political and ideological message is the same as the one that all the leaders of the European countries, the IMF officials, and the oligarchy in general, have above all implemented against the working class and people of Greece.

Our analysis of the reasons for the government's refusal to withdraw the legislation is also based on the fact that while the government could give in on certain items (the caps on industrial benefits¹, for example), it has not yielded on what was the heart of this reform.

The determination to pass the law – including in the absence of a parliamentary majority by the use of Article 49-3 of the constitution² – has been accompanied by attacks, also never used before, against the CGT [General Confederation of Labor] and its leadership; attacks by the employers, one can say, but also by the Prime Minister, attacks that have intensified throughout the months, including an attempt to ban the trade union demonstrations in opposition to this law.

¹ The law would include capping benefits that the Industrial Tribunal, the court with jurisdiction in labor law, could provide to the worker for unfair dismissal.

² The recourse to Article 49-3 of the Constitution allows the government to end parliamentary debate on a law and “to assume responsibility” before parliament. In this case, if the opposition files a “motion of censure” but this does not get a majority vote in parliament, the law is adopted. The government used Article 49-3 three times in the case of the El Khomri law.

A strong, sustained opposition

The CGT (and to some extent the other unions that were part of the front of struggle) well understood the consequences, which explains the very significant mobilizations of its organizations and its members. Although these mobilizations reached a million demonstrators on some important days, it reached a ceiling rather quickly that it could not exceed. It was not easy to make the masses of workers understand the consequences, to the degree that the “labor law” was not a direct attack and did not immediately affect their interests (as the pension reform in 2010 did, which affected everyone immediately). However, throughout the mobilization period, the movement received broad support from workers and more broadly, from the masses, as was shown particularly by opinion polls throughout the movement.

But to win the repeal of this law, the demand of the movement throughout the months of the mobilizations would have required the building of another relationship of forces and another confrontation, at another level, with the authorities.

The origin of the movement

As has been said and written many times, this labor law was **the most anti-labor legislation** of Hollande’s five-year term. Announced at the beginning of 2016 after several other reforms, it crystallized the opposition of the trade union movement and of a part of the youth.

This labor law actually came after several reforms that were already strong attacks against the working class and the broad masses: ANI (National Inter-Professional Agreement) – the responsibility pact, CICE [Competitiveness and Employment Tax Credit], the Macron Law, the Rebsamen Law, reform of the labor inspection, etc., which led our party since the end of 2013 to characterize the policy of the Hollande government no longer as social-liberal, but as neoliberal, a policy against the working class³.

³ See Supplement No. 13, “Hollande: a policy against the working class” – March 2014.

During 2015, the Macron law, particularly the opening of several sectors to competition but especially the change concerning the opening of shops on Sundays and at night, crystallized the anger of shop workers, mainly in the large cities and especially in Paris. In October 2015, the brutal repression against the workers of Air France, who dared to show their anger at the announcement of a layoff plan, aroused strong reaction from the activists and others; the workers legitimized worker violence against the violence of the bosses and their state. The announcement in early 2016 of prison sentences against eight trade unionists from the Goodyear plant in Amiens only strengthened the consciousness of the class character of justice and in response developed a broad current of solidarity.

But it was also in the climate after the terrorist attack of November 13, and against the will of the authorities to impose a state of emergency, which raised the consciousness of the need to oppose this attempt to muzzle the workers' and popular opposition. At the end of January 2016, an important demonstration took place to denounce the government's desire to make the state of emergency and deprivation of nationality into law.

Thus, in February 2016, when the draft of the El Khomri legislation was introduced, an immediate response developed; first on the internet with a petition that quickly garnered more than a million signatures, and on social networks with videos of youths who launched the slogan "we are worth more than that!"; from then on a collective of unions and youth organization was estab-



lished which called for the first demonstration on March 9.

Following this first demonstration, the government made some adjustments to its bill, it negotiated changes underhandedly with the CFDT, which was quick to accept them; it then withdrew from the collective with one or two other class collaborationist organizations. A group of seven organizations (CGT, FO [Workers' Force], Solidaires, FSU [United Union Federation], UNEF [National *Union* of Students of *France*], UNL [National Union of High School Students], Fidel⁴) would remain united until the end. This would be the pivot around which the movement would organize, with the CGT and to a certain extent the FO playing a leading role.

The characteristics of the movement

This is a movement that developed with the working class organized in its unions at its center. Around this there was a mass of workers, workers with unstable jobs, the unemployed, youths in unstable conditions and declassed intellectuals, who saw in this bill one attack too much! The attack provoked a fightback, first and foremost against this law, to demand its repeal. It is this slogan of repeal that cemented the unity of the trade unions, the youths and, more broadly, all participants in the movement. But this protest movement went further, as evidenced by the slogan taken up very widely in all the contingents: **“Young people as galley slaves, women in unstable positions, old people in misery in this society; we do not want this, we are fighting!”**

The movement has been organized in various ways: in strikes and demonstrations, at a certain point in the blocking of strategic sectors (ports, refineries, transportation, waste collection and treatment), and the occupations of plazas, especially in Paris and some provincial cities.

These occupations of plazas – called “nuits debout” [night protests] – organized particularly by the entertainment industry and teachers, aimed at broadening the movement by allowing all to come to discuss, exchange experiences, talk about their situa-

⁴ Four worker trade union organizations – CGT, FO, Solidaire, FSU (teachers) and three unions of university and high school students – UNEF, UNL and Fidel.

tion, etc. This movement, which was quite significant in the first phase, then waned, on the one hand due to the increasingly strong repression and constraints imposed by the authorities, but also because this movement experienced the limits of debates, which were certainly interesting but soon were exhausted.

By refusing to have any leader, by putting into practice “direct democracy,” this movement showed its distrust of political parties and the electoral system, criticizing the anti-democratic institutions that do not represent them.

Clearly it was the 12 days of strikes and demonstrations that were the hallmark of this movement, which was interrupted due to the summer holidays and the final adoption of the law by the Parliament during this period. But for the activists, it is not over! The first round was lost, but not the war; the class war continues.

This is the difference between this movement and the previous ones.

That hundreds of thousands of demonstrators gathered 12 times during the full state of emergency is already an important sign of the maturity of the movement, which refused to put aside its social demands under the pretext of the war on terrorism. It should be noted that the CGT denounced the implementation of the state of emergency.

Furthermore, this movement maintained its unity despite all the maneuvers of the authorities: the attempt to split the trade union front, to separate the youth from the movement, by satisfying certain demands of sectors in struggle in order to get them to abandon the demonstrations, separate negotiations with certain unions; but especially, when the weapon of division was not enough, through massive and systematic use of repression. This was particularly the case on May 1, but it quickly became systematic. Closely surrounding the protesters, a real provocation against those who wanted to fight, a huge police deployment, systematic searching of the protesters, breaking of the blockages, water cannons, tear gas, etc.

The mass media also played a particularly negative role, speaking very little about the movement, constantly understating the numbers involved, and just emphasizing the clashes, the violence and the damage.

One of the important characteristics of the movement, particularly of its youth component, is its interest in political discussions, analyses and proposals. This allowed our members not only to be welcomed in the contingents without any hostility, but also to be able to make our central organ, *La Forge*, more widely known. The Central Committee decided to specifically focus on the sale of our newspaper in the protests on a national level.

The slogan of repeal was chanted until the last demonstration in the beginning of July, even though it was clear to many of the protesters it would not be won. This slogan had in fact become the banner of a trade union and social movement that refused to submit. That is why this movement, even though it did not obtain the repeal of the law as it demanded, did not consider this battle to be a failure; on the contrary! It was not a failure because the movement did not submit, it did not surrender; it remained united and organized until the end.

The mobilization of the youth

One feature of this movement is the participation of some of the youths on the side of the workers. The high school and university youth, the unemployed youths or those in very precarious situations participated in the movement against the labor law. That is what frightened those in power, who made every effort to try to separate them from the movement. They used two weapons: repression and negotiation. From the first demonstrations, the police intervened at the very doors of the schools. It did this to frighten the high school students and their families in order to prevent them from participating in the protests. Then the government granted some concessions during negotiations with the youth organizations. But this was not enough. The government also tried to turn the youth violence against the union contingents, but this maneuver also failed. On the contrary, in many situations the young people who were attacked by the police and brought to police stations were helped and rescued by the unionists, so that in general the image of the unions, especially the CGT, was rather enhanced for an important section of the youth.

While, in the beginning of May, the young high school and university students took part in the contingents in much smaller

numbers, a radicalized part formed into blocs, at the head of the demonstrations, to confront the police.

How the movement gained in consciousness

The lessons learned are important, because they focus on **a start of the break with social-democracy**. The nature of this labor law, as that of previous laws, of the government's behavior toward the social protest movement, the attacks and repression it waged against the movement, all contributed to a very strong rejection of the Socialist Party and social-democracy in general among a significant part of the workers and popular movement as well as among the youth.

This movement has also raised the level of **consciousness of the class nature of the state**, a state in the service of the bosses, a state that does not hesitate to use its forces of repression, the police, army, the justice system, and media guard dogs, against the opponents of the bosses' law. The question of the **class violence** carried out by the capitalist system, the **class justice system** which severely condemned the unionists in struggle, are taken up by the militants in discussions and in their placards in the protests. This is what led our party to develop its slogan, "**for workers' and popular unity against the bosses' state, the police state and its policy of war!**", a slogan that summarizes what the workers and popular movement has lived through in the last period and with which it can easily identify.

Finally, this move allowed class struggle unionism to gain strength and occupy the center stage. The period of Le Paon (former general secretary of the CGT) is one of acceptance of the so-called "left" government has been turned; it is a time for class struggle unionism, for activists who know that we can only push back the bosses and the government on the basis of building a new relationship of forces, of strikes and stopping production by unity and organization on the basis of demands that serve the interests of the workers.

In this movement, a new generation is coming into the struggle; young people, especially young workers, have been educated. We need the union organizations to play their role, to correctly evaluate their importance in upsetting old habits, allowing them to assimilate the experience acquired.

These first real breaks with reformism, with electoralism, with bourgeois democracy and class collaboration, are important advances; but for these advances to become lessons which the workers and popular movement can use to move forward, we must make those who took part conscious. This is the orientation of work that our party has set itself.

August 2016

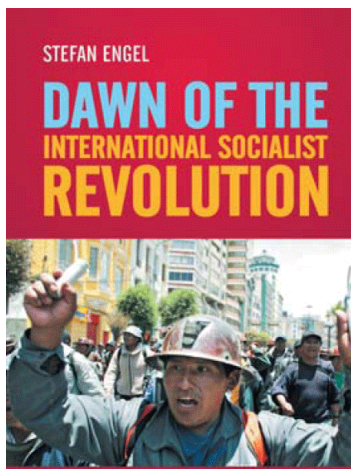
Germany

Organization for the Construction of a Communist Workers' Party of Germany

What about the International Revolution?

Criticism of Stefan Engel's "Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution" and the MLPD's Positions Introduction

Five years ago, Stefan Engel's book "Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution" was published for which he was responsible as leader of a collective of authors. In this book, the new positions of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany (MLPD) concerning the international class struggle were explained and were supposed to be an updating and expansion of Lenin's theory of imperialism and his messages views on the construction of



the Communist Party. According to Engel, "*a new phase in the development of imperialism was ushered in.*" In his opinion, the special characteristics of this "new phase" are the "*mainly international character*" of the "*capitalist mode of production*" and this "*is subject to the diktat of the solely ruling international finance capital, which is made up approximately of the 500 biggest international supermonopolies and rests on the power of the strongest imperialist countries..*" (Stefan Engel, Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution, p. 9.) [All quotes are from the English version of Engel's book – *translator's note*]

According to Stefan Engel, another feature of this phase is that "*The economic role of the nation-states increasingly is being taken over by the cartel of the solely ruling international finance*

capital, the leading imperialist states and the international organizations dominated by them.” (Ibid, pp. 9-10.)

He concludes: “*The internationalization of the productive forces must inevitably result in the **internationalization of the class struggle** and spur it on. Unmistakable signs that this process **already is in full swing** can be observed everywhere in the world...*” (Ibid, p. 12)

All this is very bare and has not been demonstrated, especially in the economic part. We are not provided with facts for the rather odd idea of a “*cartel of the solely ruling international finance capital.*” Instead, Engel confuses his readers by juggling with terms such as “*supermonopolies.*” But this word does not make any sense. “Monopoly” means that a market is dominated by a few capitalist groups. So what would a “supermonopoly” be? To do more than dominate a market is impossible. By creating such a word, Engel apparently means that there is something quite new that Lenin did not already know, something that towers over a monopoly. However, what could that be? Apart from using this odd term, Engel does not explain it. Should the creation of such a word have the effect of intimidating the readers and impressing them with the creator’s “greatness”? I read this book 5 years ago and prepared a criticism of it. However, I thought that the arguments in the book were rather poor, but at that time I refrained from the tedious chore of writing a detailed criticism as I would have had to spend a lot of time doing it. I hoped that such a superficial and obviously wrong way of looking at things would quickly be seen through and within a short time it would be dead and buried. That hope was an illusion. The MLPD had the book translated into several languages and circulated it worldwide, claiming it to be an enlargement and expansion of Marxism-Leninism. Thus, this party influenced people in many countries and contributed to further ideological confusion. Therefore, I decided to go through the book to compare its statements with reality and Marxism-Leninism.

DM, September 2016

The question of supermonopolies

Already in the introduction of his book, Engel brings up his big guns by which he would like to surpass Lenin:

*“The capitalist mode of production now has **mainly international character** and is subject to the diktat of the solely ruling international finance capital, which is made up approximately of the 500 biggest international supermonopolies and rests on the power of the strongest imperialist countries.”* (Ibid, p. 9)

What is new about the “international character of production”? Already in the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels describe how capital creates the world market and subordinates the entire world to it.

“The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe.

“In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

“The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians’ intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners

to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.” Quoted from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007>

In a very striking manner, Lenin analyzed the special characteristics of imperialism, demonstrating them with facts. What is new about this? According to Engel’s “analysis,” the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist mode of production changed? Does he mean that the fundamental contradiction is now between “national” and “international”? For us, the fundamental contradiction is still that between capital and labor. In vain does one look in Engel’s book for a clarification of what his new insights are. Let us take the “supermonopolies” and the “*solely ruling financial capital*.” What is new here? Monopolies, but no strange supermonopolies, were already thoroughly and comprehensibly analyzed by Lenin. Already in my introduction, I stated my view of the creation of the word “supermonopolies.” And what is “*the solely ruling international finance capital, which is made up approximately of the 500 biggest international supermonopolies*”? (Engel, *Dawn...*, p. 9.) Stefan Engel vehemently denies the accusation that this is the same thing as “ultra-imperialism,” invented by the opportunist and revisionist Karl Kautsky (more on this later). But what else could it be? Are these 500 supermonopolies a group acting as a unit and dominating the States? Are they indeed so all-powerful?

Whereas Lenin’s analysis of the role of monopolies, their relations to the capitalist state apparatus and their economic power is very clear, Stefan Engel’s analysis is imprecise. He writes:

“The economic role of the nation-states increasingly is being taken over by the cartel of solely ruling international finance capital, the leading imperialist states and the international organizations dominated by them. However, the nation-states remain indispensable to the capitalist system as tools of power and rule for the supermonopolies resident there in order to suppress the proletarian class struggle in these states; and indispensable in the competition on the world markets and in the struggle for world domination.” (Ibid, pp. 9-10.)

Here, he uses the term “*cartel of solely ruling international finance capital.*” A cartel means a temporary joining together of capital groups. However, such cartels are not stable. Often there are other cartels in competition with them. But Stefan Engel has the presumption to say that they are “*solely ruling.*” What does that mean? What is new or better than Lenin’s analysis? We do not know and the author too does not make it obvious. He resorts to confusing formulations. For while, in his opinion, the cartel is “*solely ruling*” and has taken over “*the economic role of the nation-states,*” he takes back this statement in the same sentence by saying that the nation-states are indispensable. Instead of a real analysis of the contradictions, he juggles with word games in a dialectical-idealist manner. Where is the evidence? He is wrong!

Instead of a cartel on the level of the big economic groups acting on an international scale, we see, on the contrary, a sharpening struggle among them. This is not to deny that they occasionally co-operate against the working class. But such co-operation is fleeting with the crisis of imperialism. This applies also on the government level. The wars in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan have clearly shown that the big imperialist powers do not form cartels but resolve their increasingly brutal and bloody power struggles against one another on the backs of the peoples.

Stefan Engel lists eight features which he alleges as evidence of a “*qualitative change in the mode of production*”: He writes:

“1. *The internationalization of the capitalist mode of production universally covers production, trade, transportation and communication today.*

2. *It refers to all sections of the economy*

3. *and rests on the internationalization of the financial system.*

4. *It also extends to science and culture.*

5. *It has standardized the training of labor worldwide and created an international labor market.*

6. *It also includes parts of the production and reproduction of human life like healthcare and the educational system.*

7. *Bit by bit almost all countries of the world are being included in this process of international production and*

reproduction. In countries which used to be mainly agricultural in character, modern industrial centers arise. That applies particularly to Turkey, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, India and Indonesia.

8. While production and reproduction are now socialized on an international level, appropriation of the created wealth is concentrated on the increasingly tinier stratum of the proprietors and guiders of the international supermonopolies. Societal wealth originates today mainly from internationally organized production. (Ibid, p. 127-128)

Most of these features were already described by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto and were worked out better and more clearly by Lenin in his analysis of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. Stefan Engel's book gives no evidence for a new phase of supermonopolies.

Stephan Engel and his collective of authors vehemently resist being lumped together with Kautsky's theory of "ultra-imperialism." The Maoist organization "Trotz alledem" ("In spite of all that"¹) reproached them about this. Stefan Engel replied:

"Equating Lenin's observation in his analysis of imperialism that the trend of development is towards a 'single world trust absorbing all enterprises without exception and all states without exception' ('Preface to N. Bukharin's Pamphlet, Imperialism and the World Economy,' Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 107) with Kautskyite notions is utterly absurd. The MLPD did nothing but follow up on this observation of Lenin and confirm it by the analysis of the reorganization of international production. The eager MLPD critics have overlooked that Lenin does not at all oppose acknowledging this objective tendency towards a world trust devouring all states, but only objects to the view that a worldwide unification of the national capitals actually could take place under capitalist conditions." (Ibid, p. 134)

If one reads Lenin's original text in context, one will be very astonished. Engel shamelessly falsified the sense of Lenin's text, and in a really absurd manner. Lenin stated:

¹ This is a quote from Karl Liebknecht, in which he stressed that despite the defeat of the proletarian revolution in Germany in 1919, we have to continue our fight to overthrow bourgeois power.

“Abstract theoretical reasoning may lead to the conclusion at which Kautsky has arrived — in a somewhat different fashion but also by abandoning Marxism — namely, that the time is not too far off when these magnates of capital will unite on a world scale in a single world trust, substituting an internationally united finance capital for the competition and struggle between sums of finance capital nationally isolated. This conclusion is, however, just as abstract, simplified and incorrect...” (“Preface to N. Bukharin’s Pamphlet, Imperialism and the World Economy,” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 105)

And immediately before the short passage quoted by Stefan Engel, Lenin clearly says:

*“Can it be denied, however, that a new phase of capitalism is ‘imaginable’ in the abstract after imperialism, namely, ultra-imperialism? No, it cannot. Such a phase can be imagined. But in practice this means becoming an opportunist, **turning away** from the acute problems of the day to dream of the unacute problems of the future. In theory this means refusing to be guided by actual developments, forsaking them arbitrarily for such dreams.”* (“Preface to N. Bukharin’s Pamphlet, Imperialism and the World Economy,” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 107)

Stefan Engel and his collective of authors did indeed bend Lenin’s text into a “convenient” shape. And they admit that they based their analysis on the *“abstract, simplified and incorrect conclusion,”* which they unscrupulously twisted as if it were *“Lenin’s observation.”* What they based themselves on is and remains the analysis given by the opportunist and traitor Kautsky. Since Lenin’s text is not convenient in their sense, they turn what Lenin described as *“abstract, simplified and incorrect”* conclusions into *“Lenin’s observation.”*

If you want to draw any concrete conclusions you will see how grotesque Stefan Engel’s “analysis” is. If you conclude that the supermonopolies are ruling – which of course implies that the states (governments) have nothing more to say – then Stefan Engel will object: “You misunderstood me! Of course the nation-states are indispensable!” Should you conclude, the other way round, that, in such a case, the states represent a separate power and are ruling, then he will complain: “You misunderstood me! Of course, the 500 supermonopolies are solely ruling!”

Or he will refer you to page 131 of his book, where he writes:

“Fourthly: General crisis management becomes one of the chief economic functions of the state.”

What is this? On the one hand, he says: *“The economic role of the nation-states increasingly is being taken over by the cartel of the solely ruling international finance capital.”* (Ibid, p. 9.)

On the other hand, the states have the *“chief economic functions”*!

Nailing a pancake to the wall is easier than tying Stefan Engel down to something.

The fact that states have a great economic importance was clearly seen during the overcoming of the bank crisis in 2008. At that time, government programs of about \$2 trillion US dollars to stimulate economic activity were spent all over the world to prevent a collapse of the capitalist system. At the same time, in the EU alone, banks were saved from ruin by government bail-outs of approximately 1.6 trillion euros (1,600,000,000,000 €). On a world scale, an enormous amount of government funds were spent to enable the capitalist system to survive. Claiming in such context – as Stefan Engel does – that the economic role of the states is increasingly taken over by the 500 supermonopolies is very far from reality. On the contrary! The more capitalism and imperialism develop and the more they head for disaster, the more they are dependent on the state apparatus to guarantee their continued existence. Countless government measures such as deregulation of the labor market, the creation of low-wage sectors, the privatization of public services, reduction of taxes on capital, open and hidden subsidies, elimination of workers’ and people’s rights, cuts to pensions and raising of the retirement age, dismantling of government social programs – all this shows the great economic importance of the nation-states for capital.

If Stephan Engel wants to defend his point of view with the argument that this shows the rule of capital, he should not forget that Marx and Engels as well as Lenin pointed out that the state is a tool of the ruling class. This is not new. However, according to Stefan Engel, the *“economic role of the nation-states”* would disappear. The facts show that it is quite the contrary. None of the “supermonopolies” would have been able to make such enormous

sums of government aid available by their own efforts. In 2011, when Engel's book was published, all these facts were already widely known.

Let us take one of the most up-to-date of many possible examples – the VW emissions scandal. A small US agency exposed the manipulation of emission levels of the VW diesel cars. Could this agency have done that without having been backed up? Of course not. It was backed up by the US government and the US automobile industry. The US automobile industry itself does not produce diesel cars. Therefore, the environmental protection standards in this field have been set very high in order to make access to the US market more difficult for foreign competitors. That this was not done for the protection of the environment can be seen in other fields, for example, in fracking or genetic engineering, where the US government allows massive damage to the environment in order to make profitable use of such technologies possible. Under capitalism, technical standards are used to increase profits and to fight off competitors. For this, capital needs the state. The state is indeed indispensable and a tool of capital's rule. With the aid of the state the emission levels for diesel allowed by law in the US were set low so that foreign competitors could hardly cope with them. The VW group reacted by manipulating the software to try to simulate "clean diesel." It took a long time until the small US agency was able to prove that. But it was persistent and had enough money for the expensive tests and was backed up. The exposure of the scandal will cost VW many billions of euros and lock the VW group out of the US market for diesel cars for a long time, because VW so far does not have any low-price technology for a "clean diesel" car. Therefore the state really has enough economic power to allow access to markets or create barriers to them.

Incidentally, the German state did all that it could in order to maintain the emission levels in Europe as high as possible so that, first, VW and other groups were able to cope with such levels easily and that, second, these lax emission levels were not reviewed. The emission tests are performed by the automobile groups themselves, that is, they are allowed by the state to falsify them as much as they want. Here too, we see the economic power of the state.

So far, so bad. We will not bore the reader with more examples. The bases for Stefan Engel's opinion are obviously not very solid. And from such shaky bases, he claims to draw conclusions of deep significance.

Stefan Engel on the international revolution

In a very long-winded manner, Stefan Engel refers to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, quoting them extensively. Thus, in his first chapter, "Proletarian Strategy and the International Character of the Socialist Revolution," he quotes what Marx and Engels stated in the Communist Manifesto:

"Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie." (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007>, quoted by Stefan Engel on page 27)

Then he tells us that Marx and Engels in the beginning (of the 1848 bourgeois revolution) took as a starting point an early proletarian revolution in several countries, but they corrected their opinion because of the real historical development. It takes Stefan Engel five pages to say that. Three more pages are filled with the statement that Lenin, based on his analysis of imperialism, concluded that it is possible that the revolution will first be victorious in only one country but in spite of that its character will be international.

There is again nothing new in what is stated by Stefan Engel and his collective of authors. Instead, a method is pursued which takes much space in the whole book. Quotations from texts of Lenin and other Marxist-Leninists are taken out of context in order to give them a certain desired direction:

"Lenin regarded the October Revolution as the start of the international revolution against imperialism. He therefore emphasized:

"This first victory is not yet the final victory, and it was achieved by our October Revolution at the price of incredible difficulties and hardships, at the price of unprecedented suffering, accompanied by a series of serious reverses and mistakes on our part...."

“‘We have made the start. When, at what date and time, and the proletarians of which nation will complete this process is not important. The important thing is that the ice has been broken; the road is open, the way has been shown’.” (“Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution,” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 56-57), quoted in: Engel, *Dawn...*, pp. 33-34)

Here, the false impression is given that this article of Lenin confirms Stefan Engel’s alleged new insights about the international revolution. This, by the way, would also mean that these “new insights” are not so new. If you read Lenin’s whole article, as we recommend, you will see that this is not at all his subject. What Stefan Engel quotes belongs to the part in which the historical merits of the October Revolution are presented – that this revolution showed how to escape “that inferno” of imperialist wars, an inferno from which people only could escape “by a Bolshevik struggle and a Bolshevik revolution” (ibid, page 56). It is typical that Engel and his collective omit the following passage between the two parts of their “quotation,” since it would have immediately shown that the text does not deal with their subject:

‘How could a single backward people be expected to frustrate the imperialist wars of the most powerful and most developed countries of the world without sustaining reverses and without committing mistakes! We are not afraid to admit our mistakes and shall examine them dispassionately in order to learn how to correct them. But the fact remains that for the first time... the promise ‘to reply’ to war between the slave-owners by a revolution of the slaves directed against all the slave-owners has been completely fulfilled —and is being fulfilled despite all difficulties. We have made the start.’ (Continued as quoted by Engel).

So closely is “*this work*” connected with the Bolshevik revolution, the question here is the revolutionary blow against the imperialist war – a further example of how “creatively” Engel bends “his” Lenin into shape. But again the rest of Engel’s assertions are already clear from the statements of Marx and Engels. We fight for the revolution in a national form, while its content is international.

In this article on the fourth anniversary of the October Revolution, Lenin deals, above all and in an expressly concrete way, with the real, practical tasks in Soviet Russia. He deals unspar-

ingly with the errors and defects. He insists on pushing ahead with building socialism in one country (which later became the Soviet Union) with all his might. The revolution remains international in content, national in form – as Marx and Engels already analyzed it. Here we present a little part of this presentation developed by Lenin.

“Let the curs and swine of the moribund bourgeoisie and of the petty-bourgeois democrats who trail behind them heap imprecations, abuse and derision upon our heads for our reverses and mistakes in the work of building up our Soviet system. We do not forget for a moment that we have committed and are committing numerous mistakes and are suffering numerous reverses. How can reverses and mistakes be avoided in a matter so new in the history of the world as the building of an unprecedented type of state edifice! We shall work steadfastly to set our reverses and mistakes right and to improve our practical application of Soviet principles, which is still very, very far from being perfect. But we have a right to be and are proud that to us has fallen the good fortune to begin the building of a Soviet state, and thereby to usher in a new era in world history, the era of the rule of a new class, a class which is oppressed in every capitalist country, but which everywhere is marching forward towards a new life, towards victory over the bourgeoisie, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, towards the emancipation of mankind from the yoke of capital and from imperialist wars.” (“Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution,” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 54-55)

This is Lenin through and through: frank, unsparing, clear, vigorous and pressing forward. Lenin is concrete and grasped the immense difficulties, errors and defects, he demands to overcome them and to resolutely build socialism in Soviet Russia (later the Soviet Union), that is, in one country. Initially Lenin and also Stalin hoped that the October Revolution would be followed by further revolutions in other countries and in that sense they spoke of an international revolution. But in this text, Lenin already corrects this and speaks about an epoch that began with the revolution in Russia and will end with the worldwide “victory over the bourgeoisie.” Therefore, he presses forward to make the real revolution successful in the national framework and thus to

contribute to an international revolution. The form remains national. In order to deny the accusation of Trotskyism, that was also made by the Maoist organization “Trotz alledem,” Stefan Engel again quotes Lenin:

“Lenin already revealed the close connection of the revolution in one country with the international revolution:

“After expropriating the capitalists and organizing their own socialist production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise against the rest of the world — the capitalist world — attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states.” (“On the Slogan for a United States of Europe,” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 342) (In Engel, *Dawn...*, p. 135)

He omits what Lenin stated immediately before:

“A United States of the World (not of Europe alone) is the state form of the unification and freedom of nations which we associate with socialism — until the time when the complete victory of communism brings about the total disappearance of the state, including the democratic. As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others.

“Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone.” (“On the Slogan for a United States of Europe, Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 342)

This is clear. It is true that Lenin here speaks of the worldwide victory of socialism and communism as our (long-term) objective. But he does not want such universal slogans to obscure the concrete tasks. Therefore, he opposes big slogans, but demands instead working for the concrete revolution wherever and however it is possible – in one single country too. And he confirms that *“uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism,”* from which he concludes that the

victory of socialism “*is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone.*” This argument, written in 1915, two years before the October Revolution, clearly contradicts using these words of Lenin to support the vague pipe-dream of an “international revolution.” Here, too, Stefan Engel and his collective of authors omit all the concrete considerations with which Lenin frankly deals with real problems and difficulties and points out a way. But that does not fit the idealist cheers for the “international revolution.”

In his own defense, on page 136 Stefan Engel also quotes Stalin:

“In the debate with the Trotskyites, Stalin too unmistakably defended the reference to the international proletarian revolution:

*“The characteristic feature of that danger is lack of confidence in **the international proletarian revolution**; lack of confidence in its victory; a sceptical attitude towards the national-liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries; failure to understand that without the support of the revolutionary movement in other countries our country would not be able to hold out against world imperialism; failure to understand that **the victory of socialism in one country alone cannot be final** because it has no guarantee against intervention until the revolution is victorious in at least a number of countries; failure to understand the elementary demand of internationalism, by virtue of which the victory of socialism in one country is not an end in itself, but a means of developing and supporting the revolution in other countries.”* (Stalin, “Questions And Answers, Speech Delivered at the Sverdlov University, June 9, 1925,” *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 169 – bold in this edition, underlining in the original, in Engel, Dawn..., p. 136)

Here, too, it is interesting to see what is not quoted. Stalin deals with the concrete question of a participant at that conference: “*What dangers are there of our Party degenerating as a result of the stabilization of capitalism, if this stabilization lasts a long time?*” (Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 165)

He gives a list of three possible dangers:

“a) the danger of losing the socialist perspective in our work of building up our country, and the danger of liquidationism connected with it;

“b) the danger of losing the international revolutionary perspective, and the danger of nationalism connected with it;

“c) the danger of a decline of Party leadership and the possibility connected with it of the Party’s conversion into an appendage of the state apparatus.” (Ibid, p. 166)

Engel quotes from the answer to the second question, and Stalin very concretely deals with the debates in the Soviet Union and with bourgeois-nationalist trends within it. At the same time and also in a very concrete manner, he deals with the unevenness of development in the world and the necessity of proletarian internationalism. But first of all Stalin, as a practical revolutionary, starts from the *“victory of socialism in one country”*! In 1925, victory had just been won against an imperialist war of intervention, with the most difficult efforts, with the hardest fights, and it had only been won with a great deal of international revolutionary solidarity! But only because Stalin’s position is firmly based on this fact do his further observations make real sense: that this victory *“cannot be final”* because *“it has no guarantee against intervention until the revolution is victorious in at least a number of countries,”* that *“the victory of socialism in one country is not an end in itself, but a means of developing and supporting the revolution in other countries.”* Nowadays, no serious communist denies this fact in any way, so that Stefan Engel must provide clarity on this point. Again, the words quoted from Stalin do not support Stefan Engel’s conception of *“international revolution.”*

Once again it is clear: Stalin did not dream based on abstract wishes and hopes, but he clearly saw the national form of the fights without forgetting the *“international revolutionary perspective.”* He confirms the analysis of Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto in the concrete conditions in which the CPSU and the Soviet Union was fighting at that time. There is nothing that could support Stefan Engel’s defense of his new phase of a *“cartel of the solely ruling financial capital”* and his *“supermonopolies.”*

Obviously, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are only quoted as

showpieces in Engel's book, to enhance the master's glory rather than to seriously deal with their real and dialectic-materialist analyses. We could provide numerous other examples where Engel twists quotations. And if Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin did indeed already confirm all the theses of Stefan Engel, we must ask him, what is really new. In all these passages Engel is rather vague, as for example on the question of whether the state still has real power or not.

Trotsky and the International Revolution

Let us now look at Trotsky, since Stefan Engel vehemently rejects being placed on the same level with him.

In 1923 Trotsky also sees that "*capitalist forces of production had outgrown the framework of European national states*" (quoted from "Is the Slogan 'The United States of Europe' a Timely One?," at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/ffyci-2/25b.htm>). He promotes the United States of Europe, which was vehemently unmasked by Lenin as being impossible or reactionary. Stefan Engel, like Trotsky, sees the "***predominantly international character***" of the "*capitalist mode of production*," but worldwide instead of related to Europe.

In his work *The Third International After Lenin*, Trotsky writes in 1928:

"On August 4, 1914, the death knell sounded for national programs for all time. The revolutionary party of the proletariat can base itself only upon an international program corresponding to the character of the present epoch, the epoch of the highest development and collapse of capitalism." Quoted from "The Program of the International Revolution or a Program of Socialism in One Country?" in *The Third International After Lenin*, at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1928/3rd/ti01.htm#p1-01>

For Trotsky, too, the "international revolution" is an abstract phrase that does not exist in the context of the concrete dialectical relation between the international character and national form of the revolution.

In the above article, Trotsky also attacks the Communist International:

“There is no justifying the omission of the slogan of the Soviet United States of Europe from the new draft program, a slogan which was accepted by the Comintern back in 1923, after a rather protracted internal struggle....

“The entire formulation of the questions as outlined above flows from the dynamics of the revolutionary process taken as a whole. The international revolution is regarded as an interconnected process which cannot be predicted in all its concreteness, and, so to speak, its order of occurrence, but which is absolutely clear-cut in its general historical outline. Unless the latter is understood, a correct political orientation is entirely out of the question.” (Ibid.)

The vague character of Trotsky’s formulation stands out. He speaks about *“the dynamics of the revolutionary process taken as a whole,”* about the *“general historical outline”* which cannot be predicted.

Instead of denying that his theses are taken from Kautsky and Trotsky with cobbled-together quotations, we would have liked Stefan Engel to have made a comprehensive explanation of what he considers his differences from these two persons to be. We do not see any difference!

To a criticism in the Indian paper “Red Star,” organ of the Communist Party of India/Marxist-Leninist (CPI/ML), Stefan Engel replied:

“When we speak of the international character of the revolution this, of course, does not mean that, in face of such a contradictory, uneven and differentiated world, a homogenous international revolution can take place. Many revolutionary movements and revolutions of varied scale and character will take place at different times. But these — and that is the decisive point — must all be related to the process of an international revolution. That is objectively the case and will be a definite fact. The success of this process will be determined by the question of how the Marxist-Leninists consciously prepare themselves for this in good time and draw conclusions for their cooperation.” (Stefan Engel, answer to the newspaper Red Star, 1 July 2004, in: Engel, Dawn ..., p. 138)

How is this different from Trotsky, who says, in the above-mentioned quotation: *“The international revolution is regarded as an interconnected process.”*

Here, too, we see no difference. Instead of a concrete analysis, we are fed with vague phrases that do not fill us up. It is a position of total arbitrariness, in which Stefan Engel commits himself to nothing, absolutely nothing.

Advice to Parties All Over the world

Nothing of a serious character, but an enormous self-confidence seems to be the motivation for Stefan Engel and his collective of authors. He provides advice, free of charges and unrequested, to governments, parties, peoples etc. all over the world.

Thus he explains to the peoples of Vietnam, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Cuba that *“only the masses can create the preconditions for another proletarian revolution in a democratic struggle”* (pp. 305-306). They will thank him for this.

He teaches the governments of Venezuela and Bolivia that *“they are striving for economic independence, but have yet to take the decisive step of overthrowing the state apparatus, with its manifold dependencies on the old exploiting classes and international finance capital, by a revolution and of establishing a new, people’s democratic power which takes the road to socialism.”* (p. 304)

But, in order to prevent being nailed down, he stresses that *“all countries have their geographic, historical, cultural and other peculiarities which the strategy for the power struggle must take into consideration.”* (p. 306)

Concerning North Africa and the Arab countries, Stefan Engel states: *“Since Arab states have at best limited bourgeois democracies, but are often ruled by despotic or fascist regimes, the establishment of an anti-imperialist, new-democratic system is necessary there also.”* (p. 311) These are cheap phrases, that are fortunately free of charge. It cannot be more than this, because Stefan Engel does not know anything about the concrete conditions in these countries and cannot know them either. With his international verbal round trip, he wants to play to the gallery. By doing so he makes a fool of himself.

He merrily goes on. In the Philippines “*the geographic conditions are important*” (p. 312). With reference to some countries of Africa – which countries they are, Stefan Engel does not say – he recommends: “*In such countries, self-run organizations of the masses must first secure the most urgently needed livelihood...*” (p. 312)

After all this good advice, he suddenly writes: “*It cannot be the task of the Marxists-Leninists in Germany to work out concrete strategies for particular countries. This must be done by the local revolutionary parties.*” (p. 312)

Regarding Tunisia, he publishes an anonymous correspondence, which he does not oppose, whose content he seems to consider correct and important enough to be included in his book: “*Very intense and also very vehement debates are now taking place in the revolutionary committees. There is no dominating party or trend in these committees, but people from the entire range of the left and revolutionaries: from social-democrats, anarchists, Trotskyites to those who call themselves Maoists and Marxist-Leninists. The building of a revolutionary party is just beginning. (Rote Fahne, N° 5, 2011, p. 10)*” (p. 314)

That is a brazen claim. The MLPD was invited to the first legal Party Conference of the Workers’ Party of Tunisia (POT). The MLPD knows this party. It is a known fact that the POT was a leading force in the overthrow of the Tunisian dictator Ben Ali. The POT is an active part of the People’s Front, which is the fourth strongest force in the Tunisian parliament with 15 representatives. Comrade Hamma Hammami, the spokesperson of the POT for many years and now chair of the People’s Front, came in third in the presidential elections with 8% of the vote. Everybody knows that we in Germany are far from having such strength and anchoring among the working class and people. In the last elections for the Federal Parliament in 2013, the MLPD obtained 0.1% of the second votes (the votes for the party lists, as distinct from the first votes for candidates directly nominated or supported by the parties). We do not want to make disparaging remarks about the MLPD’s result. Other forces that call themselves Marxist-Leninist would hardly achieve a better result at present. But this is no cause for arrogance. Under such circumstances, to state that in Tunisia “*the building of a revolutionary party is just be-*

ginning” is presumptuous. Frankly speaking, one should be ashamed to give such advice and make such “assessments.”

Precisely with such an arrogant attitude, Stefan Engel sets the tasks to be fulfilled by Marxist-Leninists in his opinion:

“1. The proletarian revolutionary movement in the centers of the imperialist world system is confronted with the historical task to wage the decisive battles against the principal forces of imperialism. Under the leadership of its revolutionary party and in alliance with the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia and the broad masses, the working class must directly overthrow its own monopoly bourgeoisie by an armed uprising and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.” (p. 307) When one reads that, one is flabbergasted! No one knew that until now! Many thanks to the great guru; let us kneel down before him! At last he has made this clear to all the stupid Marxists-Leninists. Furthermore, it is so concrete that all existing problems have been solved!

And the guru continues:

“2. The anti-imperialist liberation struggle in the neocolonially dependent and oppressed countries has the goal of overthrowing the government subservient to imperialism and of smashing the neocolonial state machine in order to achieve independence from imperialism.” (p. 307)

We can already hear all the shouts and cheers from the dependent and oppressed countries in the face of such profound wisdom. But we think that this is an expression of Stefan Engel’s arrogant neocolonialist attitude, perhaps believing that all other people are so stupid that they have to go to his school.

“4. In former neocolonial countries which are aspiring to imperialist power, like India, Brazil and South Korea, the international revolution must resolve particular contradictions and therefore has a particular character....

“It is possible that a temporary people’s war of the indigenous people or the rural peasant masses accompanies the armed uprising in the centers.” (pp. 309-310; in the German edition he says “denkbar,” which has been translated as “possible,” but may also be translated as “thinkable,” “imaginable.”)

Here, too, we must be immensely thankful. Who would have thought that there exist particular contradictions! And very many things are “thinkable”! It is also thinkable that we do not need

such talk as it contains nothing but meaningless phrases. How can anyone take it upon himself to favor the whole world with what is “thinkable” in his brain? And there is another piece of Stefan Engel’s wisdom: *“If the revolution fails the revolutionary must retreat.”* (p. 321)

Stefan Engel poses the task for the Marxist-Leninist parties in the industrial countries to win over the industrial proletariat. That is new! We have all waited for that! Of course, he has more great advice for us:

“1. Propagation of scientific socialism (...)

“2. Agitation and propaganda among the workers and the people’s masses and help in all practical problems of daily life (...)

“3. Promotion of ueberparteilich² self-run organizations of the masses for the struggle on behalf of their most important interests...

“4. The preparation and conduct of struggles must be connected with Marxist-Leninist agitation and propaganda. Struggles for economic concerns must be combined with political strikes and demonstrations and converted into a political struggle against the government. In this way such struggles for reforms can be used as a practical school of the class struggle — which is identical with coping with the influences of the petty-bourgeois mode of thinking. In the situation of the transition from the national to the international class struggle, all struggles must be used to promote an internationalist consciousness and to organize international solidarity.

These four fundamental tasks — the dialectical unity of agitation, propaganda and organization, of party and masses, of national struggle and internationalist obligation — must be oriented toward the central strategic task of winning over the decisive majority of the international industrial proletariat, of its class-conscious core, and for this reason must always combine

² (*Ueberparteilich* – literally: above-party – means working together in equality, on the basis of struggle, for common goals, without regard to party affiliation – *translator’s note*.) (Note in the English edition of Stefan Engel’s book. The common meaning of the German word “ueberparteilich” is: “non-partisan” or “above- party.”)

proletarian strategy and tactics with the strategy and tactics in the struggle over the mode of thinking.” (pp. 332-334; bold in the original)

It is unbelievable that anybody has the audacity to treat Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations like first year students in a village school, and in bold letters to spread this as the great insights of his deep analysis. Without this great guru, who would ever have thought to make propaganda and agitation, to disseminate scientific socialism, to help the masses to organize themselves, or to promote proletarian internationalism? It is astonishing that anyone is so bold to present himself as a neocolonial guru, to have his book translated into various languages and distributed all over the world.

Thereafter, Stefan Engel warns:

“The systematic concrete analysis of the concrete situation is vital for the Marxist-Leninists in order to adjust to changes in the world in good time, recognize them and correctly evaluate them, and unify their concrete strategy and tactics with the revolutionary parties and organizations in the world.” (pp. 511-512)

It would be fine if he would finally provide this. Instead we receive pages of listings of phenomena and again and again non-committal advice, that it could be this way, but it could also be another way. And finally we can create *“the dialectical unity of agitation, propaganda and organization, of party and masses, of national struggle and internationalist obligation”* (page 334) For us this says nothing.

We do not want to torment the readers with further countless “pieces of advice.” If someone needs them they can read the whole book.

All things international?

Stefan Engel’s book ends with the appeal:

“Forward with the international socialist revolution!

Forward to the united socialist states of the world!” (p. 570)

He concludes: *“With the strategy and tactics of the international revolution they are in the position to unite the struggles for social and national liberation taking place worldwide into a mighty flood which tears down all the barriers of the old society.”* (p. 569)

Apart from his above-mentioned "advice," however, he does not tell us what he means by this. Once more let us remember Lenin's comment that we already quoted above:

"As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others." ("On the Slogan for a United States of Europe, Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 342)

Stefan Engel already invoked the internationalization of production, of the ruling class but also of the proletariat. He writes:

"In the process of the international division of labor and at the level of the international systems of production, in the past few decades an international industrial proletariat has developed. Today it is the force which can and must go into the lead of the international struggle against imperialism and for socialism." (p. 18)

"The internationalization of the productive forces must inevitably result in the internationalization of the class struggle and spur it on. Unmistakable signs that this process already is in full swing can be observed everywhere in the world..." (p. 12)

"But the line of development at the beginning of the twenty-first century is clear: the main tendency in the world is the preparation of the international socialist revolution." (p. 13)

*"The **general crisis proneness of imperialism** has developed in a universal way. (...) They constitute the general material fundament for the **emergence of a revolutionary world crisis**, the objective and subjective condition for the maturing of the international socialist revolution."* (p. 18)

It is a fact that the conditions for the working class in different countries have developed differently. For example: the situation of the working class in Greece cannot at all be compared with the one in Germany. And when we look at the Indian or Argentine working class we see that the differences are even more drastic. We can take any country at all to see that the differences are growing. From the materialist point of view, this in reality leads to sharper competition within the working class. Of course,

international solidarity works against this! But this has existed since the time of Marx and Engels. What is new here?

We must even notice that the differences have become even bigger. Already in 1915, Lenin wrote: “*Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism.*” (Lenin, On the Slogan for a United States of Europe, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 342.)

Let us take as an example the so-called “Arab Spring.” In Tunisia, where this process had its beginning, there existed a strong Communist Party, a militant working class and progressive forces within the people. They were able both to chase away the dictator Ben Ali and to prevent an Islamist dictatorship. In Egypt, this process was different. While there was a strong progressive movement, it lacked a strong revolutionary force. Although the people could bring down the dictator Mubarak, imperialism could initially establish an Islamist government under President Mursi, which, shortly thereafter, when the Islamists were no longer needed, was overthrown by a military coup and a military dictatorship was again established. In Libya and Syria, imperialism took advantage of the initial protests in order to fight against governments unacceptable to them with the aid of reactionary Islamic forces and terrorist gangs. The conditions, the course and the results are therefore extremely different. Lenin always explained these difficulties in detail, while Stefan Engel avoids this.

But he took precautions to be on the safe side. On the one hand he broadcasts great slogans, while on the other hand he also states the contrary, thus covering himself against any change. He also says:

*“The concrete conditions for the proletarian class struggle differ greatly from country to country, because the internationalization of capitalist production has also resulted in the **intensification of the uneven development of capitalism.** Never before has the weight of the different imperialist powers or power blocs shifted so rapidly, have great powers and alliances fallen behind or gained new predominance so dramatically. In the ebb and flow of these changing relative strengths, the social contradictions within the countries and sometimes even these countries’ character change.”* (p. 304) (The German word

“Gewoge” has been translated here as “ebb and flow”; it means “stormy waves.” that is, “rapid changes.”)

“The reorganization of international capitalist production further intensified the uneven development of the neocolonial countries.” (p. 490)

As has already been said: it is easier to nail a pancake to the wall than to tie Stefan Engel to anything concrete in the “stormy waves” of his thinking.

And once more, we must recall Trotsky, whom we already quoted above:

“The entire formulation of the questions as outlined above flows from the dynamics of the revolutionary process taken as a whole. The international revolution is regarded as an interconnected process which cannot be predicted in all its concreteness, and, so to speak, its order of occurrence, but which is absolutely clear-cut in its general historical outline. Unless the latter is understood, a correct political orientation is entirely out of the question.” (Quoted at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1928/3rd/ti01.htm#p1-01>)

Instead of “stormy waves” we here find “dynamism” – in both cases the meaning is vague. We cannot see any difference in their positions.

It is similar with a trend to the left, discovered by Stefan Engel. With reference to Germany in the years 2004-2005, he writes:

“A trend to the left among the masses developed which increasingly opposed not only the profit- and power-hungry managers of the monopolies, but also the profit system and capitalism as a whole.

The trend to the left is an international phenomenon occurring in different forms and having different characteristics. It means the transition to a qualitatively new stage in the development of class consciousness, a definite development towards the transition to socialist consciousness.” (p. 214)

On page 155 he speaks of a **“worldwide trend to the left.”**

“Despite all the differences existing in the individual countries, class consciousness has awakened on a broad scale and a universal trend to the left has emerged among the masses.” (p. 304)

Again, this has been very simply put together. In reality, we see very different developments in the individual countries. Whereas in France workers and young people are fighting in the streets against the new labor law, the precarious work conditions and low wages, the racist, reactionary Front National obtained very high election results from backward strata. In Germany, the racist, reactionary Alternative for Germany (AfD), a party with many fascist members, obtained big election results, unfortunately, above all from parts of the working class. In some states of Eastern Europe such as the Baltic countries, Hungary, Poland etc., the most reactionary forces form the governments. And such tendencies were already known five years ago. Instead of a concrete study, there is nothing but phrases in Stefan Engel's book! Trotsky already fought with such phrases against the building of socialism in the USSR.

"Linking up countries and continents that stand on different levels of development into a system of mutual dependence and antagonism, leveling out the various stages of their development and at the same time immediately enhancing the differences between them, and ruthlessly counterposing one country to another, world economy has become a mighty reality which holds sway over the economic life of individual countries and continents. This basic fact alone invests the idea of a world communist party with a supreme reality." (*The Third International After Lenin*, at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1928/3rd/ti01.htm#p1-01>)

These phrases are similarly vague, as are those of Stefan Engel. The consistency of the book "Dawn of the International Socialist Revolution" is confusion, escape into pretty spiritual utopias instead of dealing with the realities of the class struggle. Such idealist phrases have nothing to do with Marxism.

Lenin's judgment about Kautsky's fantasies and the damage that they caused apply here too:

*But in practice this means becoming an opportunist, **turning away** from the acute problems of the day to dream of the unacute problems of the future. In theory this means refusing to be guided by actual developments, forsaking them arbitrarily for such dreams."* ("Preface to N. Bukharin's Pamphlet, Imperialism and the World Economy," Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 107)

Concluding Remarks

For many years, we have co-operated in the class struggle in many places with comrades of the MLPD, for example in companies and trade unions, in the struggle against fascism and war and against social cutbacks. Despite of our criticism, we will continue such co-operation. We think that it is necessary to create a common front against capital. Our criticism is not limited to Stefan Engel and his collective of authors. For a long time, we have observed that forces who see themselves as communists or Marxist-Leninists, frequently use the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin as a box of spare parts from which they take what is convenient for them. Everyone has an already-formed opinion, hypothesis, “analysis” and then looks for quotations in order to use them as a shield against any criticism or as “evidence.” That is not Marxism but is extremely superficial and a sign of intellectual bankruptcy. Marxism-Leninism is a science. Quotations, irrespective of from whom, are not evidence. Evidence must be taken from reality. That was the method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. And that must be the method of all Marxist-Leninists. When we study the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, we do that not to adorn ourselves with them but to understand them, to assimilate them and to use them for a dialectical, materialist and historical analysis of our situation and to progress towards the socialist revolution.

India

Revolutionary Democracy

Against Keynesian and Reformist Illusions

A prominent reference in the English language of the Marxist critique of Keynes' postulates is the booklet "Marx Against Keynes," published in 1951 by John Eaton, a leading economist of the Communist Party of Britain. Eaton's book was translated and published in the Soviet Union in 1958.¹ John Eaton's critique of Keynesianism in the light of the degeneration of the Labour movement of the UK represents one of the most valuable Western contributions to understanding the nature of reformism and its transformation into positions amenable to monopoly capital. Eaton's book was published at a time when Keynesianism had become a leading doctrine in the West to the point that many bourgeois economists came to believe that capitalism could develop without crises. It was believed that the intervention of the state-capitalist apparatus could eliminate the crises and that capitalism could grow ad infinitum. Eaton challenged this anti-scientific conception, while predicting the tendency of state-capitalism to gear toward armed conflicts. Eaton's work is also of value to us in that he exposed the reformist nature of the Labour Party with its thesis about the Western path towards socialism. The latter revolves around the postulate of the possibility of transition to socialism without subverting the private character of the ownership of the means of production, in particular and foremost in the area of industrial production. On the one hand, it shows us that the theoretical tenets displayed by modern reformism are far from innovative. On the other, it indicates that regardless of the stage of its evolution, reformism displays a tendency to accept the notion of private ownership of the main means of production in favour of monopoly capital. In this arrangement the State plays a subsidiary role with respect to production. The role of the latter and its quantitative contribution evolve in time as capitalist accumulation grows with respect to national wealth. For instance,

¹ The book by John Eaton was published in the Soviet Union by Izdatelstvo Inostrannoi Literatury, Moscow, 1958.

whereas in the post-war period the concept of nationalization could have been considered even if of a subsidiary nature,² today's Western reformism does not even dare to raise the question of nationalization of the means of production. Eaton's work helps us structure a historical perspective of Western reformism, identifying generic features. This is essential to the analysis of the economic program of Podemos and to understand its genesis and internal logic.

"The great discovery of Keynes really amounts to no more than the observation that the general crisis of capitalism would be more tolerable if capitalism could be induced to remain in the boom phase, coupled with the observation that in this phase the fact that consumption cannot absorb the total output of industry is compensated by investment expenditure." (John Eaton, "Marx Against Keynes", Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, London 1951, page 89.)

The above statement is a good synthesis of the intentions and methodology of Keynesianism, as a reformist theory. Indeed, Keynes' hostility towards Marxism and the notion of socialization by the exploited (see below) is notorious. This has been noted repeatedly even by bourgeois economists and historians, something that he did not conceal in his writings and letters. Keynes' attitude towards Marx was condescending at best. The reformist agenda seems fine with that attitude towards labour and economic relations. Whether reformism acknowledges it explicitly or not, its ultimate intent is to preserve the main economic relations, i.e. the exploitation of man by man, with the illusion that the latter can be alleviated by certain means. Keynesian recipes apparently provide

² Partial nationalization of British industry took place after the Second World War, of course, under the dominance of monopoly capital. Nationalization under capitalism and under the transition to socialism should not be confused. Eventually, massive privatizations were implemented in the 1980s. Contrary to what Navarro argues above, Britain did not become either more or less socialist as a result. In this process the Labour Party felt that a commitment towards nationalization was no longer essential. An important milestone to arrive at this realization was the publication in 1956 of "The Future of Socialism" by Anthony Crosland.

these certain means. The need for these illusory economic schemes clearly predates them. Despite the convoluted language and the breadth of economic questions dealt with in *General Theory*, Keynes is not able to prove the feasibility of the main proposition summarized above. He postulated that full employment could be achieved by a hypothetical investment expenditure that would cover the differential between the necessary level of demand and the purchasing power of the toiling masses. At first the statement sounds sort of logical. That said, as argued in a footnote above, this seemingly rational argument is based upon vulgar methodology. Let us leave that aside for the time for the time being. If one considers a simple economic cycle, by injecting resources to offset the lack of demand and with which to meet the supply generated by the economic activity, one can naively expect that by the end of the cycle all the generated supply plus enhanced savings will materialize in resources that will in turn be reinvested in production, now at a higher level. Let us also assume, for the sake of argument, that by the end of the first cycle full employment has been achieved, at which point, according to Keynes, no further injection is necessary. Because by the end of the first cycle additional funds have been made available, more resources are now in the hands of the class of capitalists (and not in the hands of the State anymore). One can argue that additional resources result, even if one takes into account the array of factors considered by Keynes, in the enhancement of the ability to invest. Let us consider the simplest situation corresponding to a scheme driven by a one-time injection, which is fair, as full employment has been achieved. With the expansion of the amount of capital in money form available by the end of the first cycle due to the injection³ of additional resources, supply is enhanced. As a bourgeois economist, Keynes considers a new state of equilibrium by virtue of which the new level of supply is now

³ In principle, by the end of the first cycle the amount of capital in money form has increased because of the appropriation of surplus value. This happens with or without the injection of additional resources by the State considered by Keynes. Needless to say, Keynes is oblivious to the concept of surplus value. Instead he is concerned with the notion of marginal capital efficiency. See Chapter 11 of *General Theory* for the definition.

consistent with the level of demand driven by the enhancement of employment (the multiplier effect). A new cycle starts. The only way for the level of demand to match the level of supply, thus retaining the condition of equilibrium, is if both the level of exploitation (rate of surplus value as defined in the first volume of *Capital*) and the level of employment remain constant. Is this a realistic assumption? Has this assumption any resemblance to how the capitalist mode of production evolves? This is where reality and illusion, science and pseudo-science, confront each other and get tested. Marx's analysis of capitalist production, which was based on an extensive collection of economic data and not on abstract schemes disconnected from economic analysis, is abundantly clear in this regard:

"The law by which a constantly increasing quantity of means of production, thanks to the advance in the productiveness of social labour, may be set in movement by a progressively diminishing expenditure of human power, this law, in a capitalist society – where the labourer does not employ the means of production, but the means of production employ the labourer – undergoes a complete inversion and is expressed thus: the higher the productiveness of labour, the greater is the pressure of the labourers on the means of employment, the more precarious, therefore, becomes their condition of existence, *viz.*, the sale of their own labour-power for the increasing of another's wealth, or for the self-expansion of capital. The fact that the means of production, and the productiveness of labour, increase more rapidly than the productive population, expresses itself, therefore, capitalistically in the inverse form that the labouring population always increases more rapidly than the conditions under which capital can employ this increase for its own self-expansion." (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter XXV)

The development of capitalism in the era of monopoly capitalism has only exacerbated this law inherent in capitalist production. Keynes' scheme contains within itself an intrinsic contradiction. On the one hand, he concedes that under capitalism, without some sort of external intervention, the level of consumption undershoots the level of supply, leading to crises. On the other hand, in order for the scheme of the multipliers to work to overcome crises and achieve full employment, Keynes has to become

oblivious to the factors that generate the imbalance between supply and demand in the first place. The fact is that State or any other form of investment cannot resolve the fundamental contradictions of capitalism, contrary to what Keynesianism so adamantly tries to argue. Keynes, and with him modern reformism, find themselves forced to cling to wishful and conjectural thinking. Such is the essence of reformist thought with regard to capitalist production and its contradictions.

Eaton further summarizes the Keynesian recipe to achieve full employment, as a condition of equilibrium in capitalist production:

“The essence of the Keynesian theory of employment is then this: the level of employment is determined by the total, effective demand, which means total purchases of consumer goods *plus* investment expenditure. In so far as income not spent on consumption fails to be matched by expenditure on investment goods, there is a falling off of total demand and therefore of output and employment as a whole, which, of course, brings with it a reduction of incomes. In our example, total income (apart from price changes) will drop well below £10,000 million, if the decisions to save are not matched by decisions on the part of ‘entrepreneurs’ to spend on capital equipment, etc. at least as much as the intended savings (namely, £1,000 million if 10% of incomes were to be saved).” (John Eaton, “Marx Against Keynes”, Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, London 1951, page 34.)



Following up on the argument of the economic cycles stressed above, one can argue that by the end of the second cycle, the equilibrium reached by the end of the first needs to be necessarily broken by the internal dynamic of capitalist production, contrary to what reformist illusions may advocate. One is led to the logical conclusion that in order to restore the equilibrium attained by the end of the first cycle, but lost by the end of the second, the State needs to inject resources yet again, and so on with the next cycle and so forth. The action of the State resembles now that of a *perpetuum mobile*. But at the end of the day, where are the resources of the State coming from if not from the appropriation of a fraction of the surplus value generated by the working class in the course of capitalist production? Bourgeois economists would tend to disagree with this statement, in that the tax on capital gains would probably be viewed as a part of the utility of capital itself. Barring that, we arrive at yet another nonsensical situation. For the working class to possess sufficient income to generate enough consumption to absorb the available supply plus sufficient savings so that banks can finance investment, it is necessary to appropriate a fraction of the surplus value in the form of taxes to be injected back again into the market. The question arises then as to why should taxes be appropriated by the State in the first place if these are going to be injected back in the economy and be eventually placed in the hands of the capitalists. One would wonder if taxes that would be released by the State to production would instead not be appropriated by the State and be released to the markets, wouldn't the effect be the same? At the end of the day, these resources end up in capitalist production anyway. The answer to this paradox is found in yet another paradox, the postulate of multipliers. Here the postulate of the multiplier effect defies plain arithmetic.

Keynesianism operates under the assumption that the market on its own is unable to attain the desired equilibrium, not understanding that the fundamental dynamic that drives this feature is not *laissez faire* itself, but the contradictions inherent in capitalist production. Keynesianism and reformism share the illusion that mechanisms can be found to overcome the antagonistic contradictions that are rooted in production run by capital. In practice Keynesianism becomes an instrument in the hands of monopoly

capital, in that not only does the latter play a prominent role in the market, but now, the state apparatus, resources and regulatory functionality also serves its interests. Reformism advocates the illusion that the state apparatus could be used to redistribute wealth, with which to alleviate “income inequality”. However, such a proposition lacks economic foundation: the action of the State serves to further accelerate capitalist accumulation, as any form of “stimulus” ends up in the capitalist market. The illusory character of reformism lies in its inability to understand the economic processes that underlie the propositions put forward. However, there is a heavy price that is brought about by this economic discourse. The Keynesian proposition collapses under the weight of its internal aforementioned contradictions. That seems fine as far as the analysis and synthesis of his doctrine is concerned. However, there are severe practical implications to Keynesian policies, as is well summarized by Eaton’s ominous premonition:

“This for propaganda purposes is described as redistribution of wealth by means of social services – ‘the social supplement to wages.’ Applied in practice, however, in a world of monopoly capitalism these theories come out looking very different. Much surplus value goes into taxation all right, but the main ‘social service’ for which it goes is chosen by monopoly capitalism. It is war.” (John Eaton, “Marx Against Keynes”, Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, London 1951, page 65.)

Indeed, Keynesianism, or in more general terms, State interventionism, since it does not resolve the contradictions of capitalism and is set in motion to defend the economic and political interests of monopoly capital, inevitably paves the way to war via militarism. The “social service” that State interventionism provides is intended to suppress social unrest and to prevent social revolutions, not to undermine “income inequality”. As the contradictions of monopoly capital deepen, state capitalism becomes increasingly belligerent. Nazi Germany is a classical example in this regard, but far from the only one. The tendency towards militarization and instigation of armed conflicts is not solely inherent to Nazi Germany, but, rather it is an inherent feature of monopoly capital. Nazi Germany took militarism to a whole new level, but it did not invent the concept.

September 2016

Italy

Communist Platform

The struggle against the reactionary transformation of the Italian bourgeois State and the December 2016 referendum

In April of 2016, the Renzi government, after having imposed four votes in Parliament at forced stages, was able to obtain the approval of a counter-reform (the Boschi Bill) that undermines the principles and values of the bourgeois-democratic Constitution of 1948, won by the Italian working class and people in their victorious struggle against fascism and the monarchy.

The central aspect of this counter-reform is the replacing of the “perfect bicameralism” [in which identical bills must pass both houses of parliament – *translator’s note*] and the “double vote of confidence”, characteristic of the Italian republican constitutional order, whose historical and political reasons reside in greater guarantees against parliamentary coups and the rise of an authoritarian or fascist government.

Now, with the approval of the counter-reform, the Parliament will still have a Chamber and Senate, but only the Chamber will have the power of granting or revoking confidence in the government. Besides, the Chamber will have legislative pre-eminence.

The counter-reform abolishes the elected Senate, depriving it of its constitutional prerogatives and stripping the citizens of the possibility of directly electing the senators.

Thus, there will be both a drastic retrenchment of the role of the bourgeois Parliament and a new concentration of powers in the hands of the government, increasing the dominant function of the Prime Minister.

Another feature of this counter-reform is the increased number of signatures necessary for the presentation of laws by popular initiative (from 50,000 to 150,000 signatures) and of the abrogative referendums (from 500,000 to 800,000 signatures), making the exercise of direct sovereignty by the people more difficult.

Besides, some essential areas of responsibility (energy, stra-

tegic infrastructure, national system of civil protection, labor protection and security, etc.) that were previously entrusted to the regions are again transferred to the central and supreme power of the bourgeois State.

A deadly mechanism

The constitutional counter-reform goes together with the new electoral law (called the *Italicum*), created on the basis of an agreement between Renzi and Berlusconi, which provides for:

- a) a large bonus for the largest party (54% of the seats, that is, 340 deputies) to the list that wins the elections with a minority of votes, on the first or second ballot;
- b) an anti-democratic threshold barrier for small parties (it is now 3% nationally, but it will increase);
- c) one hundred heads-of-lists reserved, that is not elected by the popular vote, since they will be directly chosen by the top leaders of the parties.

The authoritarian purpose of the neoliberal Renzi is a perverse combination of constitutional reform and the new electoral law that greatly benefits the largest party.

The results of this deadly mechanism will be:

- 1) the absolute majority of the Chamber, and therefore of the Government, will be the prerogative of a single party;
- 2) ordinary legislative functions will also be in the hands of the winning party; the Senate can raise objections to the laws approved by the Chamber, but, in case of a conflict between the two houses, the Chamber will always prevail, and it will actually be the Government that will dictate the contents, times and methods of developing laws;
- 3) the small and very small political parties will not be represented in the single legislative Chamber, not being able to obtain the minimum vote threshold;
- 4) many members of Parliament will not have popular legitimacy, because they will be named by their party heads-of-lists, and they, in turn, will decide the persons to be included on the lists;
- 5) the party that wins at the elections will always have control of the Parliamentary Committees, and it can assign all the Committees to itself, if it is politically suitable to them.

6) as the new Senate does not have a vote of confidence in the Government, the latter will be made up of the majority party in the Chamber without needing an agreement with other political forces, and so it can only fall on account of internal struggles in the winning party.

The combination of the constitutional counter-reform and the *Italicum* profoundly modifies the present institutional and political order.

This summarizes the transition from perfect bicameralism to perfect authoritarianism, transforming the Italian Republic, characterized by the centrality of Parliament, into an authoritarian and reactionary bourgeois State, dominated by a limited oligarchy.

From the bourgeois-democratic Republic to the authoritarian Republic

The political aim of the Renzi government is the establishment of an absolute system of an autocratic kind, without external balances, minimizing the central role of direct suffrage and the effective role of Parliament, which becomes utterly subordinate to the executive.

Therefore, there will be a stable government with strong powers concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister, able to impose – without parliamentary intervention – the policy of the oligarchy over the workers and broad masses, to quickly approve the laws necessary to satisfy the interests of the financial monopolies, the wealthy and the parasites.

In this way, the Renzi government and the economic and political forces – national and international (US, NATO, EU, Vatican, Israel) – that support it, aim to rewrite Italian class relations in favor of big capital; they aim to liquidate the democratic rights and dismantle the political-institutional framework achieved by the anti-fascist struggle, in order to immobilize and disorganize the workers and trade union movement.

This project has been in preparation for a long time by the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie that have attacked the Constitution since the 1950s, trying to modify it so as to strengthen the power of the capitalists.

In these decades the ruling class boycotted the bourgeois-democratic Constitution, so that some of its provisions became a

dead letter. The bourgeoisie has always openly denied the Constitution inside the factories. It has gradually deprived Parliament of its functions, accomplishing *de facto* the growing prevalence of the executive over the legislative and judicial powers, and its “emancipation” from the popular will.

In the last decades – from the P2 (a criminal organization linked to the US) to Craxi, from Cossiga to Berlusconi, from Napolitano to Renzi – the trend has been the transition from parliamentary government to presidential government, from the electoral system based on proportional representation to the majority electoral system.

The constitutional reform and the *Italicum* demonstrate that, in the epoch of imperialism, the bourgeois State is losing its limited democratic features and is becoming more and more reactionary, abolishing the freedoms and democratic rights won by the working masses with their blood.

After the change to the second part of the Constitution, there will follow the inevitable attack on the first part, already starting on concrete political ground. For instance, Renzi’s Job Acts turns upside down the formula of the Republic “based on labor”, and enacts the primacy of capital and financial parasitism.

The liberal and reformist leaders are again preparing the way for right-wing populism and fascism.



The economic crisis is speeding up the reactionary change

The reactionary process has been strongly speeded up by the outbreak of the economic crisis of 2008, which deepened the decline of Italian imperialism and drove the bourgeoisie to take more aggressive positions.

The political regression, the attempt to concentrate and strengthen the executive power, is connected to the increased difficulties in which the weak Italian monopolies find themselves and to the need to intensify their predominance over the economy and society.

In what way? By directly controlling the State and placing it at the service of their exclusive interests; utilizing its apparatus and its policies to increase the exploitation of the workers and to transfer wealth from the popular strata to the oligarchy; removing the traditional “obstacles” (the slowness of parliamentary activity, trade union relations and above all the rights and organizations of the workers) that slow down the destruction of social gains; arming the State to defend their spheres of influence and to plunder the raw materials of the dependent peoples.

In conformity with these needs, in the last years there has been a constant development of the reactionary process, accompanied by the following phenomena:

- The increasing restriction of popular sovereignty: since 2010 the government in Italy is no longer the result of the citizen’s vote; first with the Berlusconi-Scilipoti government, then with that of Monti-Passera and Letta-Alfano, and finally with that of Renzi-Verdini, the bourgeoisie has adopted “technical” or extra-electoral solutions without a popular mandate.

- The almost exclusive prerogative of the legislative function has been in the hands of the government: in the last two legislatures, almost 80% of the laws approved were introduced by the government.

- A profound modification of the system of bourgeois and petty-bourgeoisie parties, that now have turned into “liquid” parties, characterized by a chief and a narrow group of devoted leaders, without any appearance of internal political democracy and without a large base of mass membership.

- The passive and full acceptance of the diktats of the EU-ECB-IMF, the neoliberal memorandums, the austerity policies, etc.

- The modification of the labor codes, the adoption of anti-worker laws and anti-democratic and discriminatory trade union agreements, the attack on collective bargaining, the continuous limitation on the right to strike.

- The persistent violation of article 11 of the Constitution and the reinforcement of war operations abroad, under the leadership of the USA and NATO, the growth of military expenditures and the militarization of society.

With the coming to office of the government of Matteo Renzi, the secretary of the Democratic Party (DP), to which the big bourgeoisie has assigned the command, the reactionary process has reached a new stage, in which – with the change of the State-form of the class rule of the bourgeoisie – what has happened on the political ground is being codified at the constitutional level.

The push of the international monopolies

Of course, not only the Italian but also the foreign monopolies are interested in the constitutional counter-reforms and in strengthening the executive power.

One of the obstacles that the financial oligarchy wants to eliminate in order to completely achieve its criminal policies is the existence in Europe of the constitutions won after the Second World War that protect the fundamental rights of the workers.

For example, in May 2013, JP Morgan, the powerful global financial services monopoly (well known for the fraud of the subprime mortgages and the scandal of derivative securities) published a report showing the need for political intervention in the internal affairs of the States of southern Europe, in order to promote constitutional reforms based on the neoliberal policies of austerity of an authoritarian type.

In that report JP Morgan defined the constitutions adopted as a result of the fall of fascism as “*unsuited to further integration in the region*”, as they show “*a strong socialist influence, reflecting the political strength that left wing parties gained after the defeat of fascism*”.

These constitutional systems exhibit “*weak executives, weak central states relative to regions; constitutional protection of labor rights; consensus-building systems which foster political*

clientelism; and the right to protest if unwelcome changes are made to the political status quo”.

The report ends with a significant statement: “*The key test in the coming year will be in Italy, where the new government clearly has an opportunity to engage in meaningful political reforms*”. That is, it must get rid of the Constitution of 1948.

Evidently, the process of authoritarian transformation of the bourgeois institutions in Italy corresponds to definite needs of international financial capital, which aims at increasing the exploitation of the working class, wants to place onto the workers the consequences of the economic crises, and is interested in the privatization and the interests of the colossal Italian public debt.

With the constitutional and political counter-reforms, the Renzi government has transformed into law the needs of the most reactionary and most imperialist sectors of finance capital, engine of the reactionary and fascist change all over the world.

The referendum of December 2016 and the social-democratic opposition

The law of the constitutional counter-reform was passed by Parliament with less than 2/3 of the votes of its members. Consequently, in order to come into force, according to article 138 of the Italian Constitution it has to be submitted to a popular referendum, which will probably take place next December.

This is the third constitutional referendum that has taken place in the last 15 years and it comes after the one in 2006, in which the attempt by Berlusconi to change 57 articles of the Constitution was rejected.

Renzi has declared many times: “If I lose, I will go home. And not only will I go home, but I will withdraw from political life”. Maybe this is a bluff; anyway it is proof of the fact that the arrogant prime minister has made great promises to the imperialist circles that put him in power. Now he is seeking to make more compact the DP, he is mobilizing the media and the university professors, and he is trying to transform the referendum into a personal plebiscite. He is going on the attack, relying on the subordination of the minority of the DP and the weakness of the bourgeois opposition. The General Confederation of Italian In-

dustry, Confindustria, announced its support to Renzi in exchange for a new reduction of taxes on enterprises.

The referendum will be an important political battle. If the number of “NO” votes exceeds the number of “YES” votes (in this type of referendum a *quorum* is not necessary), there will be two political consequences: the constitutional counter-reform will be rejected and the Renzi government will go through a crisis.

Renzi and the Democratic Party (a rotten fruit of the long transformation of the old revisionist CPI), as the principal authors of the reactionary transformation of the Italian State, have started a big political and media campaign to approve the counter-reforms with the support of the biggest economic and the financial oligarchy, and with the backing of right-wing sectors that voted for the Boschi bill (for instance, the Verdini group, linked to Berlusconi and the “dark forces” of the State).

Against the Renzi reforms a large democratic and progressive coordination has been created, which brings together some two hundred parties, associations, trade unions, etc., and thousands of individuals.

This is a positive act, which shows that there is a great social and political division on the question of the counter-reforms. But there are profound limits and errors in the leadership of this coordination.

The social-democratic and reformist leaders, the left wing of the bourgeoisie and its intellectuals, hide from the masses the character and origin of the reactionary measures, and present themselves as the defenders of the current state of things.

These people limit themselves to the juridical-constitutional arena, trying to avoid the mobilization and direct intervention of the working class, the development of a large movement of struggle against the reactionary project supported by monopoly capital. They want to avoid the connection between the victory of the “NO” votes in the referendum and the fall of the Renzi government.

The revisionists go on deceiving the workers, stating that is possible to achieve socialism in the framework of the present bourgeois-democratic Constitution.

In reality, they both cannot conceive of any system except the capitalist one, and go on spreading old and new disastrous illusions. Their political objective is to be an “alternative” gov-

ernment with a new bourgeois center-left, based on the DP.

The position and struggle of the communists

We communists are carrying out a harsh battle in opposition to the constitutional counter-reforms from our class and revolutionary perspective.

As opposed to every position of indifferentism, we do not underestimate the importance that the laws approved by the Renzi government have for the bourgeoisie, which strengthen the power of the executive, curtail the rights of Parliament, eliminate the democratic freedoms of the workers, and prepare a harsher repression against the workers and popular movement.

They are measures that lead to the establishment of a reactionary, anti-worker and warmongering regime, with some fascist features, in our country.

The attitude of the Marxist-Leninists towards bourgeois democracy is not characterized by indifference and a schematic approach, and it is not always the same under different historical and political conditions.

As firm supporters of the revolution and the proletarian dictatorship, we tirelessly defend the basic democratic gains that the working class has wrung from the bourgeoisie through many decades of relentless struggles and we resolutely fight to expand these freedoms; we denounce the authoritarian positions of the bourgeoisie and the Renzi government, and we act to provoke its fall through struggle and under an avalanche of “NO” votes in the referendum, in order to defeat the reactionary plan of monopoly



capital.

In this political battle we do not forget the real class character of the bourgeois-democratic Italian Constitution of 1948, the restricted and conditional nature of its rights and freedoms, limited by the existence of capitalist exploitation and a bourgeois State which, *“even in the most democratic republic, and not only in a monarchy, is simply a machine for the suppression of one class by another”* (Lenin, *“Democracy” and Dictatorship*, 1918).

One simple example: the right to work, solemnly proclaimed by the Constitution, has largely disappeared for the new generations in Italy.

Therefore, we call on the working class and unemployed people to mobilize *en masse* and to organize the united front of struggle against the capitalist offensive, political reaction and the perils of war, to open the road to an alternative of power: a popular Republic with a socialist Constitution that guarantees the rights to the proletarians and all the working people, using the concrete methods to make these rights effective.

On the tactical basis, we promote the organization of the workers, the working people, the youth and the women of the popular strata, in Committees for the “NO” votes in their workplaces, in their neighborhoods, etc. These Committees should have two functions: to explain the nature and political and social consequences of the constitutional and political counter-reforms; to support and broaden the existing struggles of the exploited people, together with the other existing class organizations. We are working for local demonstrations and for a great united national strike with a demonstration to take place in Rome before the referendum.

The victory of the “NO” votes to the constitutional modifications can only occur as the result of a broad worker and popular mobilization against the capitalist and government forces that are directing the anti-democratic and authoritarian projects.

Toward a sharpening of the class struggle

The defeat of the reactionary project in the December referendum and the consequent resignation of Renzi would create serious political problems for the bourgeoisie in the formation of a new governmental majority; it would sharpen the clash among

the State powers, which is taking place together with the economic crisis and the downfall of Italian imperialism.

At the same time, a popular victory against one of the most important political projects of the ruling class could foster the rise of a mass movement able to carry out a revolutionary practice.

In this situation new political perspectives could be opened up: it would be possible to put on the agenda the question of a government based on worker and popular organs, able to carry out a real struggle against reaction, to take resolute measures against finance capital and to satisfy the vital needs of the working class and broad masses.

If, on the contrary, the “YES” votes wins, it is foreseeable that Renzi will move forward the date of the congress of the PD and will move at once to early elections with the new electoral law, in order to exploit his advantage and to take control of Parliament and the government. In this way, he would proceed to eliminate the remaining rights and gains of the workers and their organizations, to eliminate public services, to apply unmercifully the Jobs Act and the EU measures, etc.

In either case, a sharpening of the economic and political class struggle in our country is looming, in which the working class can develop the consciousness of the need for a revolutionary rupture with the capitalist-imperialist system.

The struggle of the working class and the most advanced sectors of the broad masses has to continue regardless of the results of the referendum, at a higher and more determined level, within the more general battle for the revolution of the proletariat, the only social force that can take our country out of the blind alley into which the bourgeoisie has dragged it.

This is a revolution for which the subjective political conditions – first of all, the independent and revolutionary Party of proletariat – are lacking, while all the objective conditions of an economic and social nature for its success have existed for many decades.

*Communist Platform –
for the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy
July 2016*

Mexico

Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist)

From the National Teachers Strike to the General Political Strike

The National Teachers Strike lasted 124 days (from May 15 to September 16), led by the heroic National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE). It is providing us further great lessons that the Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist) – PCMML – and its mass organizations are systematizing. We are here providing a brief summary for this issue of our journal *Unity and Struggle*.

The education workers on strike broke the 72-hour limit that the bourgeois state and its Professional Teaching Service law imposed on them. It fired them en masse, and they went through an electoral situation with revolutionary tactics. They were able to generalize the struggle of the barricades, developed the mass revolutionary violence and used a combination of forms of struggle on the road to the emancipation of the proletariat and the masses that we have to follow to achieve the victory of the proletarian revolution.

It was important to raise the trade union fight to a higher level in order to confront the power of the bourgeois state during those 124 strike days. At the high point of this battle, the power of the Mexican State was severely shaken and the mass movement stood as an unbreakable wall. The intellectuals of the regime quickly gave the order for a change; they proposed to modify the educational counter-reform, to recognize and remedy the damages it had caused and to release the political prisoners; but behind the scenes their representatives pleaded that the strike would not remove further accumulated injustices in the heart of the proletariat, the broad masses and the peoples of Mexico.

But the central problem was the balance of forces between class enemies, it put into play the whole tactical and strategic capability of both sides; the plea of the State passed over to threats, from threats to the withdrawal of all offers, and then again to the offensive by the Mexican State.

On the side of the CNTE, as a great United Front of the democratic teachers, the struggle of ideas, the discussion to develop the best tactics for the moment, was placed on the agenda.

I. Some Elements of the Economic and Political Situation in the Country

The government of Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN) is a government that emerged from the rubble of the international economic crisis into which the world has been plunged since 2007, although the cycle was completed after 2011, razing and destroying the productive forces in its path, and leaving vulnerable the whole economic, political and social structure of capitalism around the globe. Today it is threatened by a new storm of crisis that is looming dangerously in the future of the world imperialist system.

The accelerated process of rightward motion and fascism in the world today is also seen in Mexico, with the offensive unleashed by the EPN government against the working class and peoples.

1. The Economy Continues to Fall.

The economic situation of our country is characterized by the fall in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the geometric increase in the external debt of the public sector, the fall in industrial activity, the cutback in the government budget, the lowering of the prices of raw materials and oil, a currency exchange that has already exceeded 20 Mexican pesos to the dollar (that is, a devaluation of the Mexican peso to the dollar of 13,334 percent from 1982 to Sept. 22, 2016), which are ingredients that herald a new crisis.

In this context the Department of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP), providing the results of the second quarter, showed a contraction of 0.2%, a serious situation amid a stagnant economy; a downward adjustment of GDP growth for 2016 was announced for the second time in the year; they say there will only be an increase of 2%.

The SHCP so far this year made two cuts to public spending, the first was of more than \$6,687 million dollars in February; and the second was of \$1,603 million dollars in June.

In the six years of EPN's term the determining role of the external debt in artificially prolonging the decline and crisis of Mexican capitalism has been evident: the external debt increased by 63% from the beginning of his term in December 2012; it now accounts for over 45% of GDP. The SHCP also stated that in 2000 the foreign debt was \$70,260.4 million dollars, however, from that year to date \$516,062.9 million was transferred abroad in the payment of debt and interest, that is, 7 times the external debt we had in 2000.

2. The Political Decomposition Is Growing.

a) There is a process of sharpening in the class struggle, which is expressed in the sharpest contradiction between the exploited and oppressed and the financial oligarchy, more open contradictions within the ruling class, and the objective need for the proletarian revolution. At this point there is a process of sharpening of the class struggle, a product of the imposition of the structural counter-reforms, the economic stagnation, intensification of wage exploitation and the spread of poverty. Our people have carried out various struggles against the megaprojects, repression, forced disappearances, mass layoffs; in defense of public education, health care, democratic freedoms and political rights. This has led to imprisonment, assassinations, disappearances, militarization of increasingly large areas of the country and mass repression. But despite this, the struggle and resistance have continued throughout the country, some struggles smaller and others more widespread, but all of these forms show the discontent and exasperation with bourgeois plunder and decay.

b) At this stage of the class struggle there is also a contradiction within the ruling class, which is not yet expressed as a political crisis within the regime, but rather as a manifestation of the weakening and loss of hegemony of a sector of the financial oligarchy that, in the last thirty years, benefited from the neoliberal economic policy shown by the export of commodities, and from large government budgets for public works. But the loss is also affecting its favorite sons. For example due to the reform in telecommunications, as well as the recession in mining, Carlos Slim lost \$14,900 million dollars of his fortune, no small amount as this is 20% of his total wealth, because of the fall of America

Movil in the stock market, as well as of the company Minera Frisco. He has not been the only victim of the telecommunications reform, which is the result of a fight over markets. Salinas Pliego has been hurt by the collapse in the stock of Azteca and Elektra TV; he has lost 50% of his wealth. The statements by Alfredo Harp Helu, another prominent member of the financial oligarchy, in favor of a dialogue with the teachers, are an example of these contradictions within the oligarchy. There is also a sector of the financial oligarchy that is demanding the revival of the domestic market, the raising of wages, the reactivation the agricultural sector. Miguel Angel Mancera, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and Cuauhtemoc Cardenas are some of the spokespeople for these sectors.

The audits of the budgets of five governors (Veracruz, Chihuahua, Quintana Roo, Coahuila, Sonora) by the Department of Tax Administration express the adjustments of the internal accounts. In Morelos, the movement demanding the ouster of Graco Ramirez clearly has a popular basis and support; a reactionary sector allied to the PRI in the region is trying to take advantage of this. There are also the recent changes in the federal cabinet caused by the struggle of the CNTE and due to the brief visit of Donald Trump to Mexico.



Banner reads: "The educational reform does not only affect the teachers, but the people as well."

The removal of Beltrones (national leader of the PRI) for his failure in past elections shows how contradictions within the ruling class are developing. Similarly, the resignation of Luis Videgaray, former Minister of the SHCP and close ally of Peña Nieto, is a clear sign that the contradictions are continuing to grow as we approach the 2018 elections.

c) The movement towards fascism has intensified, as well as the decomposition and decay of the regime, which has touched bottom. Its crudest form is the fight for markets for the distribution of drugs by the various cartels, which are connected by a thousand threads with (or are even the same as) the state apparatus and financial oligarchy itself. It is seeking to amass wealth even in the midst of blood and corruption: human trafficking, enslavement of migrants, killing of women, sexual exploitation of women and children, kidnappings, riots, extortion have become “normal”. This is evidence of a system that no longer has anything to offer humanity but parasitism, decay and putrefaction of a decadent and reactionary class.

II. From the National Teachers Strike to the General Political Strike

The teachers’ movement in Mexico has played a key role in the struggle of the popular classes. Since its inception in 1979 the CNTE has been a mainstay of the historical struggles, such as the struggle for the democratization of the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE). At various periods it has managed to be at the center of the main struggle throughout the country, at others, it has been a very important pillar to hold up various popular struggles, such as the uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), and more recently the struggle for the presentation alive of the 43 students of Ayotzinapa, among many other cases.

In the recent history of the class struggle, no organized movement has managed to remain unscathed by popular battles; the CNTE, 38 years after its birth, in 2016 has waged such an impressive battle that some intellectuals have called it the decisive wave. We do not believe that it was really the final battle, but the National Teachers Strike that lasted 125 days has been the

most important battle that has been fought in Mexico, at least in the last 20 years.

1. The Background the National Teachers Strike

A few days before the inauguration of Enrique Peña Nieto in December 2012, the implementation of a set of structural counter-reforms was announced, among the most important of which was the educational counter-reform; in February 2013, amendments to Articles 3 and 73 of the Constitution were published in the Official Gazette.

In August 2013, when the new laws (General Law on Education, Law on Professional Teaching Service and the law creating the National Institute for Educational Evaluation) regulating the changes made to the Constitution were initiated, the CNTE began an indefinite strike on August 19, lasting 55 days, which managed to incorporate new contingents of teachers into the struggle and to prevent the implementation of the educational counter-reform in some states.

One of the main reasons why the teachers' struggle in 2013 did not achieve its goal is that it did not manage to fully centralize the struggle under a single political and organizational leadership; the various contingents fought hard against the imposition by the State, but the latter was able to take advantage of the unevenness of the struggle and broke up the strike of the CNTE.

Since then, there have been several major battles by the teachers, but the struggle that stood out in 2014 and early 2015 most strongly was that of the Parents of the 43 student teachers disappeared in Iguala, Guerrero. Following the waves of popular struggles against the regime, they stood at the head of a powerful movement whose central demand was the "presentation alive of the 43." With this struggle the Mexican government entered into a decline, but the strength of that movement was still not sufficient to change the balance of forces in favor of the masses in order to advance further in the struggle. The General Strike of Agricultural Laborers in the San Quintin Valley in the far north of the country, begun in March 2015, also contributed to this perspective just as the National Teachers Strike did on the way to the General Political Strike.

There was a serious discussion in the teachers' movement on tactics for continuing the battle against the incorrectly named "educational reform." In the debate among the various positions that coexisted among the teachers until early 2016, a National Teachers Strike, with the prospect of a national strike, developed as part of the fight against the regime of Peña Nieto.

Once the tactical line of the National Teachers Strike and the National Strike was resolved, an intense discussion began about when and under what conditions the CNTE should launch the indefinite work stoppage, as a major action of the National Teachers Strike. Among the basic conditions that the CNTE set to go on strike was an internal agreement among the largest contingents to begin, continue and finish the National Teachers Strike together. This agreement was ratified at the Representative National Assembly, the highest democratic decision-making body of the CNTE.

The support of the parents, the social organizations, unions, and all the popular sectors would be indispensable for the victory of a strike; therefore from the last quarter of 2015 the CNTE began a series of bilateral meetings with various organizations and unions in the country in order to build a unitary process. This was then finalized at a meeting of all of these: "intermediate meetings" whose aim was to build a united front of struggle against capital.

A strong alliance was also being built with parents in different parts of the country, leading to a national grouping; it was not able to unite all the forces, but it was a noticeable achievement before the strike.

After a consultation with the rank and file, the diplomatic work within the CNTE began through bilateral and multilateral meetings with the main trade union sections of the CNTE, it was agreed to begin the National Teachers Strike on May 15, 2016, in the form of an indefinite work stoppage of the teachers and through various demonstrations.

In the months in which the strike was being prepared, important and permanent actions took place; as a result of this constant mobilization, a media slander campaign was launched against the CNTE; all the media controlled by the financial oli-

garchy coordinated a smear campaign against the teachers, creating the conditions for moving on to direct repression.

At first, Chiapas was the priority focus of the repression, including police and military attacks; at the same time it was the contingent with the best political and organizational conditions to become the vanguard of the teachers' strike. In the middle of a police repression to lift the blockade on the highway from Tuxtla Gutierrez to San Cristobal de las Casas, set up by the teachers of Section 7 of the CNTE-SNTE, the teacher David Gemayel Ruiz was killed on December 8, 2015, and thus the preparation for the National Teachers Strike began with the spilling of blood.

Section 22 of the CNTE-SNTE in Oaxaca was also included in the plan of repression prior to the strike. In addition to the media campaign, the leaders were persecuted and their salaries were suspended, they filed criminal charges and then began to arrest the mid-level cadres. The first four were arrested in October of 2015; in April and in May a few days before the beginning of the strike, others were arrested, including the Financial Secretary. So far he has been the highest leader arrested in the history of the Oaxacan teachers' movement; previously due to its strength and ability for organization and mobilization the teachers were always immediately released, now this was not the case.

Guerrero and Michoacan were also scenes of repression in this period, although at a lower level; the whole attack of the police, the Mexican Army and Navy, was focused on their deployment in Chiapas and Oaxaca. In all cases, the government of EPN counted on the participation and support of the state governments and many municipal governments to implement its plan of repression against the teachers and with the support and propaganda of the whole mass media.

It was clear that the Mexican State was making great efforts to prevent the National Teachers Strike from the beginning. It sought to incite public opinion against the teachers, to break the solidarity with the teachers' struggle through fabrications and lies, classifying the teachers as violent criminals and vandals. It tried to break the internal unity of the CNTE and disorganize its ranks; it sent the leaders to prison to provoke fear and terror among the rank-and-file teachers. In the final stage of preparation for the strike, the Mexican government, through the Secretary of

Public Education, Aurelio Nuño Mayer, threatened to deduct from their salaries the days not worked for teachers absent from their workplaces for more than three days and threatened those who would join the strike and be absent from their workplaces with dismissal. The Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) said it had ready more than 26 thousand people (scabs) who would replace the striking teachers. It is noteworthy that in Mexico, teachers have no right to strike because they are considered public servants, so in the history of the CNTE, strikes in fact are not legal.

2. The National Teachers Strike Breaks Out.

Amid the tension and threats, on Sunday May 15, 2015, in the major cities, demonstrations were held, the most multitudinous taking place in the south-southeast, but everywhere a single message was given: the teachers in the country had decided to start the National Teachers Strike and would not return to their workplaces until the educational counter-reform was abrogated; thus they showed their willingness to challenge the Mexican government and the financial oligarchy. The first battle of the CNTE was victorious, it was able to fulfill its first collective decision: to begin the National Teachers Strike together, avoiding a disorganized action and with a single demand: to repeal the educational counter-reform. It had defeated the government's attempt to prevent the outbreak of the strike; all its threats, the smear campaign and terror had failed.

Once the strike had begun, the correlation of forces between the Mexican state and the CNTE rose to the maximum; on the one hand the government launched a political and media offensive, announcing that it would not establish a dialogue with the striking teachers, that the education law was not up for negotiation, that it could talk with the teachers once they suspended their strike. Otherwise, they would be punished and dismissed within 96 hours, including the non-working day on which the strike began.

For its part, the CNTE and the hundreds of thousands of striking teachers decided to break the 96-hour ultimatum; they said that they would not allow the dismissals, that they would confront the government policy and would not return to classes

until they took back the educational reform. They also added other demands: the State would make restitution for the damage caused by this reform: the dismissals, suspension of wages, freedom for the political prisoners and punishment for those responsible for the government repression, etc. The teachers of the CNTE, far from being frightened by the massive campaign unleashed by the media against them, announced that they would increase the level of their actions until their demands were resolved.

The passing of the 96 hour deadline of the strike marked a second defeat for the Mexican regime. Not only did the teachers defy the threat of mass dismissal, the general opinion of the Mexican people that the teachers' struggle was just did not change, despite the insulting media campaign. The government, in order to hide its failure, announced through Nuño Mayer ("Sergeant Nuño") that more than 3,000 teachers in Oaxaca, Guerrero and Michoacan would be fired, that non-payment of wages would be made, and exempted Chiapas from these sanctions, stating that they would be given a "different, special treatment". The government's defeat in this battle was not only expressed in the fact that there were not 3,000 teachers on strike, but at least a quarter of a million teachers who had joined the total work stoppage, and many more who participated in the teachers' strike without being absent from their workplaces. As time passed, the government, seeing that the support of the people and the parents for the teachers continued to grow, decided not to carry out the layoffs, and applied the non-payment of wages very sparingly, thus demonstrating its failure.

Meanwhile the strike grew in strength, there were increasing actions, and some states that had not taken part before joined. There was no region without actions that became part of the National Teachers Strike, even if they were small ones.

The fascist policy of the state, especially its direct repression against the teachers' movement, was temporarily neutralized by the success of the strike and by the electoral process that the country was approaching. One of the repressive measures at that time was to prevent the establishment of the encampment of the CNTE in Mexico City, ousting the teachers there on several occasions.

3. The National Teachers Strike and the Elections

On June 5, 2016, 21 days after the beginning of the National Teachers Strike, elections were held in 12 states, in which governors, mayors and local deputies were elected. This election was considered part of the realignment of forces, and a prelude to the presidential elections of 2018, in which the next president, 500 deputies and 128 senators will be chosen, so that this election was one of great importance.

What should be the correct tactics of the CNTE in this electoral scenario? This was one of the discussions that the teachers took up while they were preparing the strike, because given the level of political impact that these elections in particular had in the country, it was not possible for the teachers, in the middle of such an important struggle that was developing, not to take a position.

Another element to consider is that of the states with the four main sections of the CNTE, in only one, Oaxaca, were there to be elections; in the other states, local elections had been held on June 7, 2015, when the CNTE and the National People's Assembly, led by the parents of the 43, called for a boycott of the electoral process.

The above is the reason why the main discussion on the elections took place in Section 22 of Oaxaca. After an intense analysis and discussion, the teachers agreed to promote an electoral tactic of preventing the return of the PRI and to strike at the en-



tire bloc of the bourgeois right, represented by the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party], PAN [National Action Party] and PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution], so that they actively promoted a vote against these parties. This position benefited MORENA [National Regeneration Movement], the party of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. In the other states, the CNTE teachers were involved in the electoral process to a lesser extent.

Street protest actions continued, and the government's position for a dialogue remained closed throughout this period.

The election result was not an absolute victory for the CNTE, nor for teachers of Oaxaca. In that state, neither the teachers nor the popular movement had its own candidate. There were some candidates of the democratic teachers to the local parliament registered by MORENA, but in most cases the candidates represented the interests of the bourgeoisie. The PRI candidate for governor of Oaxaca won through fraud, with little difference, the MORENA Party, participating in elections in that state for the first time, was strengthened. At the national level the PRI lost the race for governor in 7 of 9 states, but the PAN (of the far right), in some cases allied with the PRD, capitalized on the debacle of the PRI and the PRD became an appendage of the PAN. MORENA did not win any governorship or any legislative majority, except in the elections to the neoliberal so-called "Constituent Assembly" in Mexico City, but managed to be placed in a very privileged position, becoming an alternative of the bourgeoisie to rule the country.

The lesson is that the results of the election showed the rejection by the Mexicans of the government of EPN, throwing the PRI out of the government in several states. However, the elections are designed in such a way that despite the defeat of the PRI, the bourgeoisie does not lose control and the dictatorship of the financial oligarchy is ensured, among other reasons because we the proletariat and peoples of Mexico do not have our own instrument for the electoral struggle.

At the national level there was an electoral defeat of the PRI, which was not victory for the CNTE, but the political authority of the Mexican State to carry out its repressive plan against the teachers was worn out. As a consequence of the defeat of the PRI its national leader, Manlio Fabio Beltrones, resigned after the

elections. One positive thing for the teachers' strike was that the tactic of intervening in elections deepened the contradictions among the sectors of the bourgeoisie. By focusing their blow against the right and the extreme right, they managed to win the support and backing of social democracy and reformism. This then translated into demonstrations in Oaxaca before the elections and nationwide on June 26 in Mexico City, a demonstration that included contingents from MORENA, the CNTE and the 22nd Global Day for Ayotzinapa and Mexico, and which demanded justice and punishment for those guilty of crimes against humanity committed against the population of Nochixtlan, Oaxaca.

4. The Policy of the State towards the Teachers' Strike Reached Fascist Limits.

Once the elections were over, the financial oligarchy again showed its ability to strike at the movement through the media, the military and by political means: The mass media intensified its smear campaign against the teachers' movement, it repeated statements from the employers' confederations and the organizations of the PRI, called for some demonstrations (particularly in Oaxaca), dressed in white, led by prominent men of that party or entrepreneurs. They marched with slogans for social peace and tranquility, alleging that the violence was caused by the teachers, and for the recovery of economic life. In reality, behind this discourse, they were preparing a fascist, violent and criminal attack against the CNTE.

After June 6, the government prepared a heavy blow at the heart of the National Teachers Strike. Oaxaca and Chiapas were undoubtedly the objective of this macabre plan, Chiapas being the more difficult one for the state due to the absolute popular support. Therefore it decided to fragment the fortress of the CNTE in Oaxaca, using all its police and military ability in this region. The number of detainees grew; then in an unprecedented move, on June 11 and 12 they detained the Secretary of Organization and the Secretary General of Section 22, who in turn form a cardinal part of the national leadership of the CNTE. This was meant to cause terror and disarray among the rank and file and disorganization among the leadership.

The teachers of Section 22, far from fleeing in terror, reinforced their plan of struggle. The parents joined the mobilization actions in the most decisive ways; they set up huge blockades and barricades on the main roads in the state, which became permanent.

The first direct clashes between the repressive forces and the teachers and popular movement took place in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, when the Federal Police, the Mexican Navy and Army, claiming that there were fuel shortages in the region, began the assault to open up access to the “Antonio Dovali Jaimes” refinery and then tried to remove other barricades and blockades at various central points in the region. The response of the movement was to prevent the roads from being opened, coming out with stones, sticks, fireworks to confront the aggressors. This was a firm response in which all the peoples, peasants, indigenous and neighborhood residents managed to drive off the repressive forces. This led to a toll of hundreds of wounded, but they managed to reestablish all the blockades and add new ones. These events took place a month after the beginning of the National Teachers Strike.

Along with this military police raid, they also besieged the City of Oaxaca from different sides; the repressive forces mobilized to enter the city, which was also converted into a fortress defended with barricades. The popular response was similar to that at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec; still more, at a point tens of kilometers from the City of Oaxaca, the people came out to prevent the police and army from passing through. The main connection between Oaxaca and the capital of the country is a highway on which, less than 100 kilometers away, is the town of Asuncion Nochixtlan; there barricades were set up to prevent the passage of the federal forces, whose mission was to drown the struggle of the teachers in blood.

The Massacre of Nochixtlan

On June 19 the federal forces, after several days of being bogged down, received the order by the Mexican government to launch a full offensive on the teachers and popular movement in Oaxaca. The fascists of Peña went into action; they reviewed their criminal army, counting on the soldiers and mobilizing their

paramilitary groups. They were armed to the teeth, received logistical equipment, trucks and vans, tanks, helicopters, etc., and calculated how much blood and how many lives it would take in order to remove the teachers and the Mixtec peoples who inhabited this region. The objective was to give a real example of fascist terror to their masters and to the peoples of Mexico and the world.

In a battle that began in the morning and lasted more than eight hours, the repressive forces, through military and criminal maneuvers, with land and air equipment, attacked the teachers and local inhabitants who came from different corners of the Mixtec region of Oaxaca to support them. In a pitched battle, the passage of the fascist forces was prevented, with the sad toll of 10 dead, 27 injured, some very seriously, and hundreds arrested.

The fascists planned and calculated all their actions, prepared their massacre up to the last detail, even preventing medical services for the wounded of the teachers and popular movement. But there was one thing that the fascists did not consider, the anger in the heart of the Mixtec peoples that has existed for centuries. They could not see that the meadow was ready to burn, and that the news would run like wildfire. Thus in an instant, from different corners of the Mixtec region, people came to join this great popular battle to prevent at all costs the criminal forces from passing through and to prevent the massacre from spreading through more of the Oaxacan territory, making use of legitimate self-defense and revolutionary mass violence. This is what happened.

In those same hours, pitched battles were developing in towns and suburbs at the western entrance to the City of Oaxaca. The most important battle, and the one in which the passage of the fascists was prevented, was in Hacienda Blanca, where a youth who had joined in the defense of the City fell in combat.

The Battle of Nochixtlan in a few hours became the turning point in the balance of forces between the state and the teachers and popular movement; despite the blood spilled, they were able to prevent the passage of the fascist forces. One more victory was won for the National Teachers Strike, and thus a next step, the full offensive, would take place, a favorable scenario for the teachers and popular struggle throughout the country.

5. The Masses Joined the National Teachers Strike and Almost Converted It Into a General Strike.

Each victorious battle of the National Teachers Strike not only strengthened the internal unity and raised the morale of the education workers across the country who were fighting against the so-called educational reform, so did the morale of the whole class of the proletarians and broad masses. Every victory and every battle led by a correct tactic brought in new fighters, new contingents of the teachers themselves, new sectors of the masses. But it was the massacre of Nochixtlan, the Battle of June 19th, which turned the many organized and unorganized groups with an accumulated anger against the regime of Peña Nieto en masse.

The street demonstrations became mass demonstrations; the National Teachers Strike was evolving, qualitatively and quantitatively; every day it was becoming more like a General Political Strike, especially in Oaxaca, Guerrero, Chiapas, Michoacan and for a while in the capital of the country. New contingents of teachers strengthened their participation in the National Teachers Strike in Jalisco, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Baja California and Hidalgo. In the midst of an unprecedented growth of mass mobilization further contingents of teachers were encouraged. Even though they were not members of the CNTE, they saw a favorable moment to come out to fight for their specific demands, as in the case of the teachers of Nuevo Leon, who fought important battles in the City of Monterrey against some effects of the educational reform.

The National Teachers Strike did not develop into a general strike because it lacked the integration of other sectors of the workers from other states, who could not stop work or deepen their participation in the actions in order for it to break out.

Under these conditions, the CNTE went over to the offensive, in early July, carrying the mobilization to its highest stage. This offense shattered the fascist statements of representatives of the government that there would be no dialogue or negotiation to discuss the educational reform. With the growth of the mass mobilizations, the government swallowed its words and began negotiations under Miguel Angel Osorio Chong, Minister of the Interior, with the leaders of the CNTE, through the mediation of a National Mediation Commission (CONAMED), composed of

various intellectuals and led by the Services for Peace (Serapaz). This was an NGO with some experience in dialogues between the government and belligerent forces such as the EZLN or the People's Revolutionary Army, for example.

The CNTE and the government agreed to begin the dialogue with four points: 1. Repeal of the educational reform, 2. Building an educational model according to the interests of the peoples of Mexico, 3. Reparation for the damages caused by the reform, and 4. Justice for the massacre of Nochixtlan. The regime then sought, through its demagogic politics, to prevent further escalation of the popular mobilization, and began by offering to resolve the last three points, but refused to repeal the “educational reform.” It offered to talk about a suspension of the [teachers'] evaluation and to seek to “strengthen the educational reform.” The interpretation of these Government approaches is that they were in fact acknowledging the failure of their counter-reforms in education, and they were formalizing a way to repeal them. But it was clear that they did not want to publicly accept this and express it that way. It was a recognition of their defeat given the strength of the National Teachers Strike.

6. Build the Victorious Outcome of the National Teachers Strike and Prepare for the Coming Battles.

At that time the debate within the CNTE again became tense over the two alternatives: To accept these proposals of the government, seen as a victory for the National Teachers Strike, without the repeal of the educational counter-reform, but only opening the way to this? Or to reject these “offers” and to consider that the proposals of the government were not enough; that the conditions allowed the teachers and popular movement to continue accumulating forces and impose on the government the full, immediate and definitive repeal of the educational counter-reform.

Around that debate, the leadership of the CNTE hesitated, coupled with the constant maneuvers of the government which was intentionally delaying the negotiating progress, sowing internal discord and division within the CNTE and hoping to create a more favorable situation for the government. Finally these proposals could not be realized, and after 10 meetings with the CNTE, the government withdrew its proposals and sought sepa-

rate negotiations with the main trade union sections, lowering the level of its proposals and eliminating the issue of the repeal of the educational reform. This scenario began in the third week of August, nearly three months into the strike.

By then, the forces of the movement were entering into difficulties, the 2017-2018 school year was approaching; the popular support around the CNTE continued, but it was expressed to a lesser extent in mobilizations. The process of accumulation of forces, with the same tactics as the CNTE had developed, could not grow. However, the limitations of the analysis of the CNTE leadership could not see this reality in order to take advantage of and consolidate the victories achieved. When the regime saw this situation it launched its main offensive; it refused to restart the negotiations with the United Negotiation Commission CNTE and it negotiated behind closed doors and separately with some union sections, depending on the correlation of forces that each one represented. It made “differentiated offers” and isolated some from the others, thus being able to impose their tactics in the negotiations.

Another part of the victories of the National Teachers Strike, such as the modification of the educational evaluation that the counter-reform imposed, was presented to the pro-government leadership of the SNTE. The objective of this maneuver of the government and the pro-government sell-out union leadership was that it would not appear that it was the CNTE that had won these victories, although the reality was different.

Faced with this new scenario the leadership of the CNTE was not able to overcome the tactics of the state, since certain contingents could not continue the National Teachers Strike; the retreat took place gradually, until the last contingent, in Chiapas, ended the indefinite strike on September 16, for a 124 days on strike.

III. The Unified Organizations of that Period Point to the National Assembly of the Proletariat and the Peoples of Mexico.

While we emphasized the various qualities that the movement in Mexico has acquired at this stage, now we also note that the problem of building the United Front of all the people against capital is the line that is missing in these tactics. We maintain the unified processes achieved until now, but we still lack an organi-

zation and leadership with a single perspective, a single plan of struggle and a single program for the whole mass movement in Mexico. To a great extent the lack of greater cohesion of the National Teachers Strike, with the masses flooding around it after June 19, is that it did not have this organization, so that many of those mobilized remained on the sidelines and were limited to showing solidarity but were not actively and militantly integrated into a movement that was conscious and organized for revolutionary transformations.

But the bilateral and intermediate meetings as well as joint meetings of the workers of the city and countryside, and their relationship with the Broad Social Front, the National People's Assembly, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, the Operational Front of Health Care Workers, peasant organizations, etc., were the support of the CNTE to contribute to building unity within the movement. This is the point to which in concrete practice and building of the National Assembly of the Proletariat and Peoples of Mexico and the General Political Strike have advanced, as the forms for the tactics and strategy of the proletarian revolution in Mexico.

IV. By Way of Conclusion

The National Teachers Strike succeeded in cornering the Mexican government and its educational counter-reform, leading it to the verge of cracking; it helped to undermine the political power of the regime, making use of all forms of struggle. For the first time after many years, the mass movement was at an equal balance of forces with the regime. The National Teachers Strike inflicted several defeats on the government of EPN, however it was not able to achieve all these victories that were in the hands of the CNTE. This strike showed that the General Political Strike was feasible and possible, that it is necessary and urgent; inevitably the next step after the National Teachers Strike is to advance along the path of the General Political Strike and the building of the National Assembly of the Proletariat and Peoples of Mexico, which will develop a single plan of action, a single program for the whole movement and a Unitary Command, which will provide the struggle with the perspective of an offensive of the masses in the next period.

Morocco

Democratic Way

Fourth National Congress of Democratic Way

On July 15, 16 and 17, 2016, the fourth national congress of Democratic Way, was held in Casablanca under the slogan “Build the Party of the Working Class, of the Working Masses and the United Front to Overthrow the Makhzen¹ and Build the National, Democratic and Popular State.”

This congress took place 21 years after the Founding of Democratic Way, which is considered the political and ideological continuation of the Moroccan Marxist-Leninist movement, particularly *Ila al Amam*², and is based on:

The experience and achievements of the struggle, the rupture of the Moroccan Marxist-Leninist movement, and particularly of *Ila al Amam*, with reformism and revisionism, and on the theoretical contributions regarding the fundamental contradictions (between the bloc of the ruling classes and imperialism, particularly French imperialism, on the one hand, and the working class and toiling masses on the other); to point out the Makhzen mafia that holds power and much of the country’s wealth as the direct and main enemy that prevents democratic and social progress, as well as the specifics of the formation of the Moroccan nation as an Arab-Amazigh³ and Muslim nation and with strong regional specific issues that require the recognition of broad autonomies.

Twenty years of struggle of the Democratic Way led us to define three processes that have structured our activity and our struggle:

¹ Makhzen: An Arabic term that means a fortified place, warehouse, etc. Today it is applied to the dictatorial apparatus of the Moroccan State.

² An Arabic term meaning “Forward”

³ Amazigh: Berber

- The process of formation of the independent political organization of the working class and toiling masses by taking root in them and the unification of the Marxist organizations.
- The process of establishing independent organizations of the masses (unions, associations, neighborhood committees, etc.), their unification and integration in the struggle for national liberation and democracy.
- The process of the formation of the front of the popular classes.

To these three processes was added, during the third national congress in 2012, participation in the building of a Marxist International.

These processes in the concrete reality of our country, allow us to draw the following lessons:

- The unification of the Marxists has proved difficult (due to sectarianism, leftism), if not impossible (divergences over the strategy of change, the policy of strategic alliances, etc.)
- The movement of February 20, which is part of the revolutionary process that shook the Arab world, has failed to achieve its objectives, in particular due to the absence of a party that would organize the working masses and represent their interests.

Democratic Way decided at that congress to engage without further delay and with all its force, with unwavering determination, in building the party of the working class and the working masses as its central task, without failing to reach out to the Marxist militants.

The movement of February 20 forced us to review and re-fine our strategy and tactics, as it raised specifically the problem of power, alliances, slogans, organizational forms and forms of struggle.

Our third congress, held in July 2012, took up these concerns and took as its slogan “For a United Front of Popular Struggle against the Makhzen and for a Democratic Regime.”

The theses adopted at this 4th National Congress go further and define more precisely:

At the strategic level: the nature of the state that would allow the development of all sections of our people, namely a national, democratic and popular state as a phase that puts forward the first steps towards socialism, the objectives and stages of rev-

olutionary change (stage of national, democratic and popular change, stage of socialist change and the relations between them), the instruments of revolutionary change and the class fronts. The program of radical democratic change of transition towards socialism was examined, enriched and made specific.

The independent organizations of the broad masses play a strategic role of prime importance, because thanks to them, the masses learn to organize, to defend their interests and direct their affairs. They constitute embryos of opposition-power. The Party must defend them against the interference of the authorities and their allies, and help their unification and their participation in the general struggle for change, and to be very attentive to their demands, suggestions and criticisms, and in no case should it consider them as only transmission belts.

At the tactical level: The tactical alliances allow us to carry out one or more tasks, isolating the fiercest enemy in a given period, and trying to achieve the broadest possible front to strike him. It is clear that such a front has to be created on a political rather than an ideological basis, and that this front, once it has carried out the tasks for which it was formed, is no longer needed.

Therefore the Democratic Way, which is fighting tooth and nail for the establishment of a democratic front, whose main core and backbone should be the militant left, is struggling within the movement for a broader front that groups together all the forces



and people suffering from the rule of the *Makhzen* mafia over the power and wealth, and that are willing to fight to overthrow it.

The question of the Marxist International has been taken up in the thesis proposed at the Congress, which approved the activity carried out, and put forward the need to improve our support for the ICMLPO and broaden it with revolutionary organizations that call themselves Marxist, concentrating our efforts to give a concrete answer to the question “What is to be done?” in the present circumstances of the struggle and the evolution of capitalism, drawing lessons from the various Marxist contributions and the experiences of building socialism without making it a dogma.

The Congress has devoted special attention to the analysis of the current situation in the world, focusing on some serious trends:

On the national level:

The regime carried out an offensive against the masses and the militant organizations, taking advantage of a favorable situation (priority to the fight against terrorism, the bloody struggles in various Arab countries, the ebb in the February 20 movement), the support of imperialism, particularly French imperialism, financial aid from the Gulf countries in order to impose anti-popular measures (the “reform” of pensions to the detriment of retired people, the accelerated liquidation of public social services and of the prices of basic products, etc.). In contrast, the dependence of Morocco on imperialism is deepening in all fields, and its alignment with the positions of the reactionary Gulf regimes and its participation in their wars against the Arab peoples.

The broad masses are carrying out a defensive struggle in various forms and are massively boycotting the electoral farces. But these struggles are dispersed and short-lived and often fail to become organized and stable movements due to the weakness of the militant organizations and the modest roots of these among the masses.

On the regional level:

The revolutionary processes have been held back by the intervention of imperialism, of the reactionary regimes of the Gulf and of Turkey as well as by the obscurantist and Takfiri⁴ forces

⁴ Islamist extremists and fanatics

supported by them. The search for political solutions to the armed conflicts, favored by the Russian intervention that changed the balance of power, is encountering numerous difficulties.

Despite this unfavorable context, the resistance of the Palestinian people is continuing and their just struggle is attracting more and more sympathy as is evidenced by the BDS⁵ campaign and the recognition of the Palestinian state by parliaments and European governments.

On the international level:

The crisis of the capitalist mode of production is profound and long lasting. But the socialist alternative is also in crisis. So the people vacillate between the illusion of a return to the “welfare state” launched by the leftist forces against austerity (Syriza, Podemos, etc.) and the xenophobia, racism and isolationism of the extreme right. Therefore, despite their manifest failure, neoliberal policies remain at the forefront.

Bourgeois democracy is in crisis in countries where the traditional center, left and right are increasingly worn out and the real nature of these democracies as dictatorships of the multinational corporations is becoming clearer, especially with the increasing recourse to presidential regimes and States of emergency where, under the pretext of combating terrorism, they are actually combatting the rise in protests and social struggles.

The painful birth of a multipolar world is increasing the room for maneuver for the small States and the forces of national liberation. But the real solution to the current crisis lies in the fight of the Marxists for an alternative that goes beyond capitalism.

The Congress devoted particular attention to organizational issues in order to raise the Democratic Way to the level that allows it to carry out the enormous tasks ahead. Special care will be devoted to increasing our presence among the working class and toiling masses, to mobilize their energies, to achieve greater discipline and expand our ranks.

Our work in the mass organizations, relatively developed, and its modest contribution to our political and organizational

⁵ BDS: Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions: A campaign against the purchase of Israeli dates that are one of the main sources of financing of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

work was examined and revised and plans of action were updated to correct this situation. In that spirit, the internal statutes and rules have been revised and updated.

Finally, the Congress passed a resolution establishing plans of action, tasks linked to each of the four processes and to the general tasks of information and propaganda, as well as international relations.

*Democratic Way – Morocco
Casablanca, July 2016*

Norway

Revolusjon

The Britons took control! Is Denmark next?

52 percent of the Britons have spoken up against the establishment. They voted to get out of the European Union under the slogan '*Take Control*'.

Scaremongering failed to convince a majority of UK citizens to remain in the EU. The outcome of the referendum has infuriated finance capital and its politicians. Mainstream media channels and European newspapers have been flooded with sorrowful declarations and warnings of disaster.

Attempted incrimination

EU supporters at home and abroad accuse half of the Britons of having racist sentiments. They claim that the elderly by their votes have deprived the youth of a future in "Europe". The economic forecasts predict recession in Europe – as if that were a new phenomenon.

Admittedly, the right-wing UK Independence Party (UKIP) has tried to profit from xenophobia on several occasions. But this has not characterized the *Leave* campaign as such, neither on the part of its leftist sectors nor from the dominant Tory breakaway group spearheaded by the former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. The hallmark of the EU opposition in Britain – as everywhere else – is and has been the rebellion against the dictates of Brussels and against abolishing democracy and national sovereignty.

Being an old colonial power, Britain has a long tradition of immigration from Commonwealth countries, especially from the Indian subcontinent. However, since 2008 these immigrants have been met with a discriminatory "points system", while residents in the EU/EEA [European Economic Area] can immigrate and establish themselves freely. Net immigration from the EU has increased ten-fold. Massive labour migration by means of Temporary Employment Agencies has led to social dumping on a large scale, as in

Norway. It is primarily the consequences of the free flow of labour following the expansion of the EU in 2004 that British workers have reacted against, not immigration as such.

The working class voted Leave

It was taken for granted that the working class would follow the instructions of the head of the Labour party and the union bosses in the TUC to vote “Remain.” Especially so because Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, from the party’s left wing and with a record as an opponent of NATO and the EEC, encouraged them to “Remain”. However, the workers did the opposite in Labour strongholds like Sunderland and other industrial cities. 64 percent of the workers voted Leave, according to a survey. That has been crucial for the Leave majority.

The workers feel the same remoteness from institutional politics as other sectors of the population, but they are also particularly hard hit by austerity measures and welfare cuts from alternating reactionary governments. While EU demands to decrease the budget deficit are being used as an argument for social austerity and the dismantling of the national health system, Britain transmits enormous sums of money to Brussels. Even after the “EU discount” they have negotiated, Britain still pays £13 billion to the EU and gets £4.5 billion (about 45 billion NOK) back. About half of this return is transferred to Scotland, which helps to explain why a majority of Scots voted to stay in the EU.



Unresolved national questions

The referendum has taken the lid off of several simmering national issues. In Northern Ireland as well, a majority voted to remain in the European Union, especially Republicans who fear that border posts could be reinstalled between the Republic of Eire and the six northern counties. Both the Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon from the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Martin McGuinness and MEP [Member of the European Parliament] Matt Carthy from Irish Sinn Féin have demanded a new referendum.

The Scots regard the EU as a tactical ally in the fight for secession, as it would be a paradox if they rid themselves of a central power in London only to submit to the European Central power in Brussels. Irish Sinn Féin considers EU as a backdoor possibility for Irish reunification.

The withdrawal process established in the Lisbon Treaty can take up to two years, and a lot can happen along the way. One possible scenario in the long term is that Brussels and the British financial elite could try to exploit the Northern Irish and Scottish discontent in order to undermine the vote.

Elsewhere in Europe too, Brexit may cause repercussions, such as where the British Rock of Gibraltar in the Mediterranean Sea is concerned; a strategic landmark that Spain naturally lays claim to (but where the parties have agreed to disagree as long as they have been under the same EU umbrella). In terms of British special advantages in some EU countries like Cyprus and Malta, complications will transpire such as the status of British bases.

New trade agreement

Just as during the referenda in Norway in 1972 and 1994, the scaremongering from big capital has been wild and fierce: Huge ads paid for by Goldman Sachs, Airbus and even Hungary's ultra-nationalist Prime Minister Jerzy Órban have warned that hundreds of thousands of jobs will disappear, that prices will soar and that Europe will collapse.

This was the message until the 24th of June.

But suddenly it was not so bad after all. EU President Donald Tusk is now talking about a stronger (and more integrated) EU without the UK, while the week before he proclaimed doomsday

for European political civilization if Britons bade the EU farewell.

Barely hours after the voting results were official, the German finance ministry presented a secret offer to the UK for an “association agreement”, according to financial newspapers. Several think tanks and economists are already suggesting that Britain should choose a “Norwegian solution”.

A contagious infection

As anticipated, Brexit has already resulted in considerable contagion. The reactionary, nationalist and fascist parties in Europe are trying to exploit the people’s national sentiments and their rebellion against the bourgeoisie and the financial elite. EU’s own practice and policy has for years encouraged such forces, whom the Brussels mafia pretend that they deplore. The so-called troika has appointed governments completely void of popular mandate in Italy; Brussels is actively supporting the corrupt and pro-fascist coup President of the Ukraine; they are making filthy deals with the authoritarian Erdogan regime in Turkey and have as their supreme chief a representative of a Polish regime with a penchant for political censorship, xenophobia and religious intolerance.

What is being ignored is that we are talking about large and predominantly democratic popular movements demanding influence over their own lives and their own politicians. This is especially true where Denmark is concerned. Here the broad People’s Movement against the EU has started to mobilize for a new referendum on Danish withdrawal from the European Union.

The dam has burst

It was bound to happen sooner or later, but it is the British who have caused the dam to burst. The popular basis for the EU project has crumbled, and the EU will likely try to respond with an even tighter integration of the hard core member states. The Franco-German bloc might grab the opportunity to strengthen itself, now that they need not pay attention to the Anglo-American ‘Trojan horse’, the United Kingdom. At a later stage this can lead to increased imperialist contradictions between the USA and the EU and within NATO. We will, however, experi-

ence a lot of internal friction before the new course manifests itself.

The peoples across Europe are tired of being run over and ignored. They are tired of being doormats for finance capital and its rotten political system. They are tired of national sovereignty and democratic influence being wrested from them. It is a turbulent situation that reactionary and even fascist forces will try to feed upon. Thus it is even more important that all democratic and progressive forces involve themselves and do not leave the initiative to the reactionaries.

Illusions about the EU is to the advantage of the fascists

The biggest and most dangerous error that democratic and left reformist forces and parties can make is to keep singing illusionary songs about a better European Union, a kinder and more social Union etc., as the European Left does. Illusions of this sort are in reality a helping hand to the anti-labour project of this Union of Capital. And worse: As the masses see through the false notion that the EU can be reformed into something better, they will look to the reactionary “nationalist” forces as the only credible alternative.

That would be a deadly development for Europe, since these forces are a breeding ground for racism and overt fascism. Ultimately, European finance capital will put them in motion to terrorize the working class and all democratic forces while allowing the black-shirts to spew their venom against refugees, big capital, Bolshevism and “Jewish power.” Fascism will grow and advance rapidly unless the progressive forces in Europe conquer and dominate the arena of popular opposition to the EU project. The left must take the leadership of the struggle for national self-determination and democracy that monopoly capital has wrested from the peoples of Europe.

The struggle against the EEA Agreement is on the agenda!

In advance of the British referendum, Erna Solberg (Norwegian Prime Minister from the Conservative Party – *translator's note*) systematically decried the Norwegian EEA-solution (remaining in the EEA but not in the EU – *translator's note*) and told the Britons that they would “hate” it because it is undemo-

cratic! But following the final result of the British vote on Midsummer Eve, she stated that Norway has an EEA-agreement that serves us very well!

As the UK is bound to find some kind of trade relation with the EU, focus will be put on the European Free Trade Association EFTA (of which Britain was a member until 1975) and the EEA. There is already talk of an EEA+ with special advantages for the UK, as the British have clearly shown that they will not accept any kind of intervention from Brussels. When proved that Britain can negotiate an agreement with the EU, it will inevitably tear the veil away from the idolatry of the holy EEA that has shaped Norwegian political debate for decades. Not only *No to the EU* but also parties like the Centre Party and the Red are now openly mouthing demands for a referendum on the agreement.

In an attempt to stifle the debate they fear, both Erna Solberg and Jonas Gahr Støre (leader of the Social Democratic Labour Party – *translator's note*) anxiously argue that any debate on the EEA Agreement would be “irresponsible” in the dire times that lie ahead for Britain, the EU and Norway.

But this time they will not succeed in strangling the debate before it has begun!

June 2016

Peru

Peruvian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)

Call of the Peruvian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) on the Occasion of the 88th Anniversary of its Foundation

88 Years Fighting Together with the Working People: For the Revolution and Socialism!

88 years have passed since the need for an organized and fighting vanguard of the Peruvian working class motivated the amauta¹ Jose Carlos Mariategui, on his return from Europe and influenced by the socialist principles and the October Proletarian Revolution, together with revolutionary workers and intellectuals founded our Party on October 7, 1928. It was a detachment of the International Communist Movement, with the task of organizing the working class, peasantry, youth and peoples of Peru to seize the political power of the State and establish Socialism in our country, as a transition to classless Communist Society. He had to organize the party underground, selectively and secretly, with the strictest care so as not to be easy prey for reaction. Thus it was initially established under the name of “Socialist Party.”

Our Party has consolidated ideologically and politically in polemics around the need to form a political party of the proletariat – which negated APRA [American Popular Revolutionary Alliance], which advocated a united alliance of classes that was so broad and so lacking in revolutionary perspective that it was led by gamonalismo² and the parasitic bourgeoisie, which strengthened its pro-imperialist and fascist essence. The characterization of society, the prospects of the Peruvian revolution, forged it in the action of the workers and peasants who rose up to put an end to the exploitation and misery in which they found

¹ Quechua equivalent of griot, an oral historian. Also the name of a literary magazine founded by Mariategui – *translator's note*.

² From the term *gamonal*, meaning a large landowner who exploited the mainly indigenous peasants – *translator's note*.

themselves, especially the peasantry who lived in deplorable conditions by enslaving exploitation of gamonalismo.

As an immediate task it was necessary to forge the revolutionary consciousness of the masses (at that time the working class was still influenced by the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism, whose prestige lay in the winning of the 8-hour day), form the Trade Union Confederation to unify the guilds, mutual aid societies and scattered unions of workers and peasants. This federation would have as its function to spread the principles of class-struggle unionism and to strive for building the United Front based on the worker-peasant alliance. After this work an important growth of the Party cells both in the countryside and in the industrial and extractive centers was achieved.

Shortly before his death, Mariategui formulated the “Theses of Adherence to the Third International,” which stated clearly:

“The ideology we adopt is that of militant and revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, a doctrine we accept in all its aspects, philosophical and socio-economic. The methods that we support and uphold are those of orthodox revolutionary socialism. We not only reject but fight the methods and trends of social-democracy and the Second International in all its forms “.



Jose Carlos Mariategui

“Humanity never pursues foolish or unattainable dreams; humanity pursues those ideals whose realization seem near, mature and possible.”

Peruvian writer, essayist, journalist, Marxist politician and philosopher.

He also stated, reaffirming to the bases of the construction of the Party:

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

These texts exist, unfortunately for all the opportunists, who have caricatured his image: the NGOs, Trotskyism and reaction, among others, who deny his Marxist-Leninist revolutionary legacy. They claim that Mariategui was a “thinker without a party” or wanted to create a “Peruvian socialism” opposed to the experiences of the International Communist Movement and the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

After his death elements such as Eudocio Ravines (discovered to be a paid agent of U.S. imperialism), among others, carried out the liquidation of the cells formed under the influence of Mariategui, undermining the organization of the revolution in Peru. The heirs of Ravines and his practices are the revisionists, who take him as founder of their party and fulfill the same role in denying the revolutionary role of the peasantry and undermining the organization of the revolution. They supported the lies organized by the agent work of Trotskyism and were taken and presented at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, when the traitor Khrushchev centered his attack on the figure of Comrade Stalin, in order to dismantle everything that “Stalinism” had done in the USSR, that is, to bring down the Socialist system. This was not so easy for them due to the opposition of the Communist party of China and primarily as a consequence and struggle of the Party of Labor of Albania, which always defended Comrade Stalin and Socialism in the USSR without making concessions to reaction and Trotskyism.

Since the Fourth National Conference (January 1964), the Party has retaken the Marxist-Leninist theses of the revolution, abandoned by revisionism and the clique of Barrio, Acosta and del Prado, obsequious followers and servants of the Khrushchev revisionists and previously followers of Browderism, which, after their definitive expulsion at the Fifth National Conference, further accelerated the process of Bolshevik consolidation and development of the Party. The Party, in its development, has not

been immune to internal struggle, because within it there were outbreaks of opportunism and agent work, such as “Patria Roja” [Red Fatherland] and “Sendero Luminoso” [Shining Path], which were expelled with the participation of the rank and file of the Party, which fought them on all fronts. Similarly, these shoots of reaction were expelled. Recently a clique of liquidators, sectarians and bureaucrats were expelled from the Party, who sought to degrade the name of the Party and the mass organizations into a tail of reformism, which, applying sectarian, authoritarian and bureaucratic methods, liquidated Party cells and its main organs of mass work. Some comrades mistakenly say these events as emerging from personal problems within the Party leadership. We say that they are wrong; it is an ideological and political struggle in which the whole Party must engage. This misleading position that wants to reduce everything to personal problems was spread by those elements who ran around the country stating that members of the Secretariat had betrayed the party, so that one had to cut communication with the Organization, liquidating and demobilizing Party cells in an outrageous and reactionary way. Some comrades have remained in this quagmire.

Since its founding, the Party has been and continues to be the subject of bestial attacks of reaction, but has always emerged and will emerge strengthened, as this allows us to purge the Party of bad elements, strengthening ourselves organizationally, improv-



ing our methods of revolutionary vigilance, tempering ourselves in the class struggle. This also shows us the shortcomings that we still have in our methods of work and the organization of the revolution.

In relation to this we point out the task of deepening the study of the History of the Party, which will improve our understanding of the behavior of agents infiltrated by reaction, discovered and combated by the membership and leadership of the Party. This also helps us in the orientation and study of the struggles of the International Communist Movement, the exercise of frank and fraternal criticism and self-criticism. This should aim to further unify the Party ideologically and organizationally, to rid ourselves of the influence of those elements who based themselves on gossip and slander and wanted to bring down the whole organization. They will fail in their attempts to try to make the Party disappear by infiltrating it; the elements of fascist repression did not succeed in this. These opportunists and agents will also not succeed, because the Party and its mission is full of vitality, the hands of the Party cadres are not stained with the blood of the people, nor with money from selling out their struggles.

We are as fighters in the first ranks of the working class and working people, this year will be one more of struggles alongside the working class, peasantry, youth and peoples, we reaffirm our convictions and our Marxist-Leninist revolutionary militancy.

The struggles of our people point to the need to accelerate the pace, to make our organization grow quantitatively and qualitatively, since the international and national situation requires the Party of the Proletariat to take the leadership in all fronts of the popular movement and to advance towards the Revolution and Socialism.

For the Organizational Strengthening of the PCP (M-L)

The history of the struggles of the Peruvian people and the development of the class struggle have shown us that the working class, peasants, youth and working people have been able to organize with more vigor, decisiveness and combativeness in their struggles, when they have been guided by the correct proletarian leadership of the PCP (M-L).

When the cadres of the Party have taken the lead and developed the proletarian line, they have made themselves protagonists of the peoples in these processes.

Some of the facts that allow us to appreciate the advances of the struggle of the Party linked to the mass struggle are shown in the fights of the peasant movement for the Authentic agrarian Reform without payment to the landlords and the confiscation of land for the peasant communities. The fight for the defense of free education in Huanta and Ayacucho in 1969. The fight against Velasco's corporatist agrarian reform that has left the peasants in the country stuck in feudal debt. The General Strike and National Work Stoppage of the workers, peasants, students and other working people on July 19, 1977, that shook up the military dictatorship of Morales Bermudez, who had no alternative but to convene the Constituent Assembly in which the Party participated in a revolutionary way. The struggle of the peoples against the reactionary fires of Fujimori-Montesino and Sendero Luminoso, forming self-defense committees. The March of the Four Suyos³ was a harsh popular blow that marked the end of the Fujimori-Montesino dictatorship. The struggle against Free Trade Agreements in defense of national sovereignty. The peasant struggles in defense of communal territories, agricultural and cattle production, food sovereignty, the defense of water and the environment. The struggle for the cancellation of mining concessions, against imperialist voracity and the plunder by the transnational corporations. The struggle for the defense of the people's right to access to a national, scientific and democratic education. These are some examples of the combative nature of our membership and the relevance of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), which in its development has learned how to lead and organize the struggles of the people and to educate them based on their experience in struggle, seeking to raise the level from the day-to-day and economic struggle to the political struggle, for Socialism.

As we have noted, significant organizational progress of the people has been shown which have dealt severe blows to the

³ Refers to the four parts of the Inca Empire, meaning all of Peru – *translator's note.*

class enemies. In the same way, when the Party has made mistakes, the people have been left disoriented and unable to successfully confront reaction. This is because the Party is the political force that takes up the task of orientation and leadership in the struggle of the working class and peoples for the realization of their class ideals; it is their organized and fighting vanguard. It is the principal subjective factor of the Peruvian Revolution. Some deny its existence, but the Peruvian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) exists and its history is glorious, as glorious as the history of the Peruvian people, whose class consciousness is developing powerfully. Therefore it is necessary to develop within the people the task of ideological clarification and identification of the class enemies, especially when our symbols have been stained by the liquidator agents and the attacks of reaction that have made the image of a communist into an incorporation of violence, terror, assassination, blood, explosions, disappearances and kidnappings. This does not correspond to the definition of a communist revolutionary cadre, but has remained in the minds of the people due to the work and subliminal message of "Senderismo" and bourgeois propaganda. This problem has not yet been overcome, so our work must pay primary attention to showing the people that we Marxist-Leninist communists are worthy fighters in whom they can trust, that we represent their class interests, to educate them in the proletarian line. To show the people who are the ones who are fighting for the interests of the proletariat and the organization of the proletarian revolution; on the other hand, who are the allies and tools of reactionary violence, of the plans of imperialism and its lackey government in our country.

The organizational problem of the Party is fundamentally rooted in the policy of cadres, in their professionalization, in their quantity and quality, in their capacity as leaders of the masses, their reputation as honest fighters of the first rank for the proletarian cause. Therefore, the Party should improve the composition of its ranks, update our fundamental documents on the nature of Peruvian society and refine our tactics according to the international and national situation, guided by the Marxist-Leninist science and the Leninist principles of the functioning of the Party. It is a still more urgent task when the fundamental contradic-

tions of our era are sharpening, when the peoples of Peru are directly confronting imperialist plunder and the majority of the Peruvian working class is still lethargic because revisionism and opportunism are neutralizing their revolutionary strength, maintaining them in economism and promoting conciliation with the bosses and the government.

We must carry out our revolutionary labor of building the Party within the working class, for only the revolutionary party armed with Marxist-Leninist theory can make the working class conscious of its historic mission, clearly determine the objectives of its struggle and the ways to achieve them. The Party organizes, educates, mobilizes and leads the class and all its allies in the complex struggle for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism.

Dor this reason the Central Committee of the PCP (M-L) calls on the rank and file and members of the Party to speed up the process of ideological clarification and identification of class enemies, to fight the outbreaks of opportunism within and outside the Party, to overcome the tailism that makes us lag behind events; to deepen the work of education and organization of the working class, the peasantry, youth and peoples for them to be protagonists in the coming processes that will lead to severe combats. To begin we must repeal legislation that criminalizes the popular struggle, that allows the more aggressive penetration of the imperialisms into our country, that violates labor rights and the rights of the people achieved through great struggles. All this without losing the strategic orientation of forging the worker-peasant alliance for the seizure of State political power and the building of Socialism.

Long Live the 88th Anniversary of the PCP (M-L)!

Long Live Proletarian Internationalism!

**Long Live the Struggle of the Working Class
for the Revolution and Socialism!**

*CC of the PCP (M-L)
September 2016*

Spain

Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist)

Capital in Search of a Government

We Spanish Marxist-Leninists have insisted for some time that, despite appearances, the political situation has become clearer since the electoral emergence of the populist Citizens' Party in 2014. And indeed, this trend can be seen, in the first place, in a very negative sense for the laboring classes, that it is clearing the way for a new government of the ultra-reactionary People's Party (PP), which has headed the caretaker government since last December.

This fact is clearly seen by the popular sectors, and constantly recalled by the spokespersons of capital in order to demoralize the left and promote a "useful vote" for the PP by the different currents of the right. To do this, they use data from successive elections that did not reflect as expected the series of corruption scandals, which implicated leaders at the highest level, both at the national and autonomous¹ level, and even hint at the opposite. Thus, Rajoy's [head of the People's Party – *translator's note*] henchmen lost 3.6 million votes between the general election of November 2011 (10,866,566 votes) and last December (falling from 44.63% to 28.71%). But since then, they have been regaining ground: in the general election in June (caused by the lack of sufficient agreement between parties to form a stable coalition government), they regained almost 700,000 votes, winning 33%; in the autonomous (regional) elections in Galicia last September 25, they regained an absolute majority, exceeding not only the votes of the general election in June, but also of the elections in the autonomous regions in 2012, when the flood of corruption cases was not yet as widespread.

It is true that Galicia is a special case, to the point that one of the provincial leaders of the PP boasted not long ago of being a "good boss." But even in the Basque Country, the most difficult

¹ In Spain the regions are called *autonomous communities*, which have a broad level of political, economic and administrative autonomy.

territory for the neo-Franco party of Rajoy, they experienced a slight improvement between December and June, although in the recent autonomous elections they disputed the hegemony of the Basque nationalists (PNV) among right-wing voters.

Thus, the PP has been able to recover much of the conservative votes that it had lost in December to the Citizens' Party (C's): a force that combines Spanish nationalism – of truly fascist vestiges – with an atrocious neoliberalism, to which are added certain "modern" touches regarding individual rights. This enabled them to connect with a certain sector of the urban population with middle incomes. However, their agreement with the PSOE [Spanish Socialist Workers' Party] to allow Pedro Sanchez, secretary general of that party to take office – and their inability to win the necessary support to form a government earned them the loss of 400,000 votes in the second election in June. It was they who decided that the promises of the "regeneration" of C's was not worth it if their class interests and probably the "matters of principle" were at the expense of Sanchez, whom they see as a dangerous *statist* despite him not being more, in essence, than a lukewarm social liberal.

There is no doubt that millions of people in Spain were stunned and even outraged, by the resilience demonstrated by the PP and the fact that millions of workers hit hard by the crisis remained faithful to that party². It is true that, as the populists of Podemos have denounced this (while other elements interestingly enough remained silent), the "generational" factor has its weight, as well as the rural sector has. However, the process by which the Spanish oligarchy has converted its political and social project into a dominating one is in no way an exception in the "post-industrial" capitalist societies, as the bourgeois sociologists like to call them. In fact, this is taking place in the general context of the failure of social democracy, the collapse of the revisionist bloc and the triumph of neoliberal capitalism. Second, the fact remains that, at present, the relative importance of the independ-

² Remember that of the 18.1 million employed people in Spain, 15 million are wage workers and another 2 million are employers without workers of self-employed workers. The PP won 7.9 million votes in the general elections last June.

ent producers, and even more so of the rural or semi-urban population as a whole, is less than it was in the 1930s or 1960s, which saw powerful workers' struggles. It is thus necessary to address the material changes – especially in the productive structure – but we must also pay attention to the superstructural aspect (ideological, cultural and political) of the problem, in order to understand it properly and move towards an appropriate response by the revolutionaries.

Consensus Building

It is in the already mentioned overall context that followed the 1973 crisis, and in the specific Spanish circumstances of the transition from dictatorship to market democracy, in which conditions allowed the conservatives of the PP, the ideological heirs – and often biological ones – of Franco, to establish a hegemony that, today, seems very solid. For this, however, they had to count on the loyal collaboration of social democracy embodied in the PSOE, which during its first fourteen years in government faith-



Poster says: "PSOE: Vote Yes in the Interest of Spain, Referendum for the Maintenance of the Atlantic Alliance"

fully executed the well-known, historical role that has characterized social democracy. This is a role that its main ringleader, the minister Felipe Gonzalez, is again decisively playing a role.

This individual, who in 1979 pushed through the PSOE's break with Marxism, who promoted the de-industrialization of the country, the privatization of public enterprises, the entry of Spain into the EEC and membership in NATO, who subjected the Spanish economy and society to the "convergence" criteria of the Maastricht Treaty [for entry into the euro zone – *translator's note*], who allowed the spread of corruption and state terrorism, who was an enthusiastic accomplice of Bush Sr. in the Gulf War of 1991, and who was well known for his support for coup leaders in Latin America, was finally rewarded by becoming the faithful "adviser" of international capital and a counselor to the energy multinational Gas Natural.

But what interests us now is to point out how, during the governments of this character and his cronies, the cult of the entrepreneur as a "creator of jobs and wealth" became an unquestionable commonplace. The fact that a "left" government would defend such points of view, and translate them into policies (with continuous and harmful labor reforms, for example). He played his role at a time when broad intermediate sectors, and even workers, followed up positions that clearly and objectively were opposed to their class interests: individualism, full freedom of action for the employer and super-exploitation, tolerance towards fraud, subordination of social rights to property rights, etc.

Nevertheless, the workers' movement could still stand up forcefully against the reactionary measures of the "socialists" in 1988 and 1994. But meanwhile the idea was spreading that these principles were beneficial for the workers themselves, because they would create jobs, economic growth and, ultimately, social promotion, although the harsh daily reality of privatization and workplace closings flagrantly contradicted those messages. This ideology was brought to the maximum with the institutional and media promotion of the cult of speculation (the *pelotazo*) and the social success of people who became quickly and suspiciously rich, thanks to what we now know as "financial engineering," and who had connections with the Royal Family. In some cases they ended up spending some (little) time in prison, although this did

not cause them to lose all their prestige, nor did they fail to find media personalities for their nefarious if not crazy opinions.

Of course, with these facts, it would seem that bourgeois ideology has been "injected" into the subordinate classes and that, although a sector of the proletariat continued to counter the attacks (with special emphasis on the workers in heavy industry and mining, which were in the process of being dismantled), an increasing number ended up passively accept the domination of the values and conceptions of the bourgeoisie. But this would mean abandoning the dialectic and fall into the Manichean vision characteristic of revisionism, which leads to inaction, opportunism and ideological and political defeat, as is being proven in a way that now seems definitive in Spain, where Citizens' Party populism is ending up engulfing the recent offshoots of *Eurocommunism*.

It is true that the "private apparatus" of hegemony [domination], as Gramsci called it, exert a very powerful influence, whether it is the church, school or media. The same can be said of patronage networks and chieftaincy that even today largely govern the relations between the "representatives" and those "represented" in our country. But this is not enough to ensure the ascent of the laboring classes, if it is not connected with their needs and concerns.

In the words of Raymond Williams, "hegemony presupposes the existence of something that is truly total [...], which is felt to such a profundity that it saturates society to such an extent that it even constitutes the limit of logic for most people who are under its domination." Hegemony corresponds therefore to a set of meanings, values and practices that go beyond mere manipulation in order to be *lived*. Gramsci summed it up by saying that "ideologies for the governments are mere illusions. a sustained deception, while *for the governed they are a voluntary and conscious deception*" (our italics).

And indeed, the expansion of public spending, first (although at much lower levels than that of the rest of what was then the EEC), and the investment of foreign capital, later, created the conditions for social promotion and consumption of important sectors pf the workers and petty bourgeois, which swelled the electoral base of *Felipe-ism*. To this one must add an incessant

propaganda aimed at sustaining the illusion of prosperity and wealth, culminating in the spectacles of 1992 (the Olympic Games and World Expo).

Thus, there was created a significant adherence to conceptions of society and the economy that, at this point, and already attached to the Social-Democratic sectors of the PSOE and the former UCD [Union of the Democratic Center], they joined the oligarchy and their political representatives from different parties. Along with this, no less important was the continued propaganda bombardment of the "graciousness" of the regime of 1978 and its "pilots [leaders]" (with the Bourbon at its head), of which a whole generation of "children of democracy" has been the object, with the invaluable support of the attempted coup of February 1981. With all this, the political regime that emerged from the Transition managed to acquire legitimacy among broad popular sectors, despite its fascist origin.³

Moreover, this was achieved while maintaining or reconstructing, the fidelity of what has been termed "sociological Francoism." The 1978 Constitution sanctioned the continuity of Franco's repressive apparatus, the renewal of the privileges of the Church in 1979 and a conception of the State that was apparently decentralized, but that in reality denied the rights of the nationalities, did not recognize the right to self-determination and authorized the Army to safeguard the unity of Spain. Women's rights advanced very slowly, and the most traditional view of the family continued to have a privileged existence in law. Altogether, the regime responded to the oligarchic interests, but also connected with broad sectors of conservative ideology to varying degrees, and not only in the more rural areas or in the interior of the country. As one former minister of the PP bragged, in Spain there is

³ In 1969, while still under the dictatorship of the murderer Franco, Juan Carlos de Borbon swore fidelity, as the future heir of the Spanish State leadership, to the principles of the Movement (the single fascist party) and to the "legitimacy" that arose from July 18, 1936: that is, to the dictatorship that emerged from the bloody military victory against the legitimate democratic regime of the Second Republic.

no powerful fascist party because the extreme right is mostly found within or around the PP.

It is important to keep this in mind because, as some historians of Nazism (Goldhagen, Fritzsche) or US sociologists have emphasized in explaining the origin of Reagan's "conservative revolution," the ideological element can help understand the connection of certain sections of the population to a regime that can even lead them to physical destruction, as in the first case. This seems to be a major factor in explaining the resilience of the PP at this time despite the crisis and the judicial scandals.

So we have different classes and sections of classes adhering to the regime that the oligarchy had designed, although this was in contradiction to the demands of the powerful workers' and neighborhood movement forged in the struggle against the dictatorship. Thus, for several years there was an alternation in power between two oligarchic parties (PP and PSOE), sharing some essential political positions for which they had obtained the consensus of broad social sectors that, essentially, could alternate between one and the other at times, or even show their discontent by occasionally choosing forces that constitute the left of the regime, such as the United Left⁴, especially due to the crisis that began in 1993. The absolute majority won by Jose Maria Aznar in 2000 was probably the peak of the consensus achieved around the oligarchic ideology.

It is from this historical perspective that the "generational" factor makes sense that, as one sees in reality, is not such a factor.

To the above explanations, one should still add the role played by the left, and more specifically by Eurocommunism and the other revisionist "families." We have no doubt, and we have always stated, that if the position of the PSOE was important, the collaboration of the leadership of the PCE was instrumental in politically and ideologically disarming the working class. With the "consensus" of the Transition, the left gave up its own political project (and in the case of the main trade unions, eventually, they gave up opposing the increasing attacks of capital). Thus, it lost the support of the masses, the cultural and ideological socia-

⁴ A coalition of the left that arose in 1986, whose organizational nucleus was formed by the PCE [Communist party of Spain].

bility and hegemony among the working class and the broad popular sectors that had been organized around it, and that would still continue doing so in the fight against joining NATO. As a substitute for the break advocated in the early 1970s, the most varied fashions and trends, each one more opportunist and disruptive, were dominating the political discourse and action of a left that had definitively abandoned the revolutionary transformation of society and therefore the seizure of power. Thus, revisionism ended up being nothing more than the consolation of those who were betrayed by the ideological drift of the PSOE.

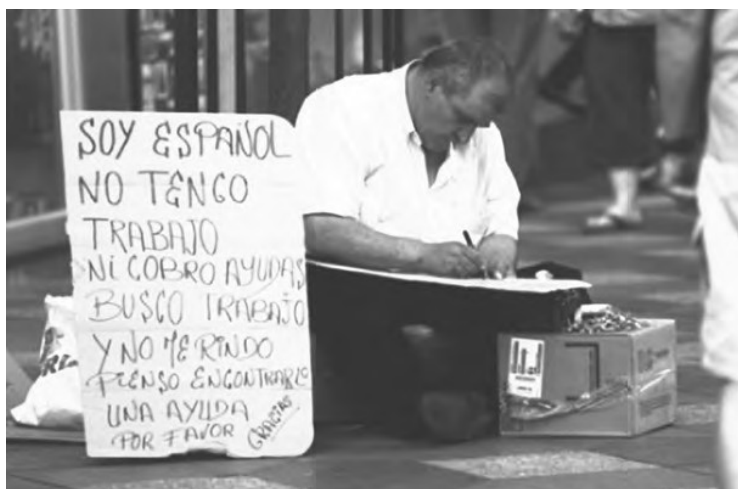
For many years, we have insisted on this last aspect in articles and documents, so we will not dwell on it here. Suffice it to say that it is with all this combination of conditions, quite consistent with each other (therefore the significant degree of stability achieved by the regime of 1978) that finally led to the outbreak of the present crisis and its effects. It would be then that the proletariat and other popular sectors would learn in their flesh and bones, in "days that are worth years," important lessons about their enemies, and when they would also rediscover some forms of political organization and action that had been abandoned by the dominant proposals both within the regime and in the organizations of the "left." The mobilizations around May 15, 2011, above all, were one of these experiences, despite their ambiguities and important limitations.

...And the crisis breaks out

The capitalist crisis has been putting the different political actors in their place; for example, the PSOE of Rodríguez Zapatero, who soon saw the policies of his administration sink into the swamp produced by unemployment, debt and "austerity" policy. Then would come the turn of Mariano Rajoy, on whom also took their toll the cases of corruption and the suffering caused by the cutbacks agreed upon with Brussels and the bosses, as well as attacks on freedom of expression, strikes, etc. The crisis also led to internal tensions breaking out in the nationalities (particularly in Catalonia), and their political expression was a growing movement for self-determination and independence. The political elites of the regime, beset by social unrest and the demands of capital, began to confront them with a virulence unprecedented in

the last 20 years, while a revitalized workers and popular movement was organized and mobilized in general strikes, to defend public services, against evictions, etc. One can see once again the Leninist theory of revolution: the division of those above launched an increasing number of workers and the broad masses into political action. As we have often said, in the spring of 2014 the Rajoy government was on the ropes.

However, as we pointed out in a recent article⁵, the subjective element was missing: the broad sectors that recently began to fight had not yet overcome the prejudices that had been noted in 2011. We communists did not know how or could not organize the masses with a perspective of rupture with the regime around revolutionary positions. And much of the revisionist left consciously devoted itself to disorganizing and encouraging the disunity of the struggles: first, organizationally; and then, when they had advanced in their unification, politically, by denying the need to go beyond partial, social demands, in order to unite them



Sign says: "I am a Spaniard, I don't have a job, I don't receive assistance, I am looking for work, I won't give up, I am looking for a little help please, thank you"

⁵ J. Romero, "The Emergence of the Citizens' Party: Opportunism in Action." At www.pceml.info, September 2016.

around a proposal leading to the struggle for power. Thus, on March 22, 2014, we saw the painful paradox of thousands of republican flags arriving in Madrid in the Marches for Dignity, etc., in the shadow of the slogan "Bread, work and housing," which the leaders of the different opportunist currents had imposed. Gramsci had already warned:

"All the more ridiculous dreamers in their ivory towers of misunderstood geniuses make definitive and astonishing discoveries; they rush toward every new movement convinced of their ability to spread their fabrications. Moreover, every collapse brings intellectual and moral disorder. We must create sober, patient men, who do not despair at the worse horrors and do not exalt themselves at every nonsense. Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will."⁶

Into this situation, already itself confused, came the emergence of Podemos. Its unexpected success in the European elections in 2014, the multiplicity of messages depending on the target audience, the promise of a supposedly early electoral victory as well as its calculated ambiguity (which they refused outright to clarify) regarding the demand for a Republic, plunged many sectors of the left, even the organized ones, into the most unfortunate disorientation. Meanwhile, it pulled this whole movement away from the street, into fledgling organizations, in order to place it at the service of merely electoral goals.

What, then, is the "hegemony" that this "left" proposes to the laboring classes? That which is limited to the "significant things" designed from above, in such an alienating form as the "false consciousness" that favors the support for the oligarchic regime. However, unlike that hegemony, which was unable to achieve changes that go beyond a reshuffling of seats, what it ends up proposing is an impossible transformation of reality through language, instead of a change in the material and social reality. (This, ultimately, leads to the use of the "significant things" at will according to the public whose vote, which in the end is the only important thing, it desires to win.) And because the terms proposed are, besides being ambiguous, easily assimilated by the

⁶ *Prison Notebooks*, Notebook 28 (III), §11, translated from the Spanish.

monarchical policy: a "break" that does not try to break with the monarchy or with the system of oligarchic domination. This is a "system" which is not monarchical, and therefore "cannot" be replaced by the Republic; one that is a "transversality" and "centralized" that within a few weeks was already part of the vocabulary of the PP and PSOE, etc. It is easy to conclude that, to the degree that Podemos shows its inability to fulfill its promises – to win elections that would allow it to form a government – or even to agree to join in one (as happened in the last two general elections), populism will be deflated, as happened to its neoliberal equivalent, the Citizens' Party.

We should again call on Gramsci to explain the class character of this populist current, when he refers to

"the absence of relations between the upper classes and the people. In the struggle between generations, the young get closer to the people, but when crises reach the turning point, the young people return to their class (this happened in the cases of the nationalist-sindicalists and the Fascists). Deep down, it is the same general phenomenon of transformism in a different context. 'Classic' transformism is the phenomenon that brought the parties together in the Risorgimento [Revival, the political unification of Italy in the 19th century – *translator's note*]; this transformism brings into sharp relief the contrast between culture, ideology, etc., and class power. The bourgeoisie is unable to educate its youth (generational struggle); the young allow themselves to be culturally attracted by the workers, and they even become (or try to become) their leaders (an "unconscious" desire to make themselves the bearers of the hegemony of their own class over the people), but during historical crises they return to the fold",⁷

and this leads to an example the Social Revolutionaries and Narodniks.

There is therefore very little that this "left" and its subordinate IU [United Left] can offer to our class and our people in the context of a crisis that tends to worsen, as well as the consequences of imperialist globalization; it is most likely that they will not take long to "return to the fold." The same with the

⁷ *Prison Notebooks*, 3 (XX) §137. (English edition, translation by Buttigieg, 1996, Vol. 2, p. 115.)

PSOE, once its social democratic promises of social promotion are finished. Probably the lack of program of all of them is already causing the frustration about which we have repeatedly warned, and the latest developments in the PSOE have also had their impact. Not coincidentally, the coalition between IU and Podemos lost a million votes in June compared to December 2015.

On the other hand, the right knows how to connect with some lower classes frightened by the crisis, unemployment and immigration and the insecurity resulting from attacks on the peoples. And it does so using terms that easily relate to the discourse of the PP, which has always used them when it has tried to attract the lower classes, once the latter have stopped seeing themselves as a class, through nationalism, obsession with "security", identity, etc., that is, fascism. It is a tactic that, *mutatis mutandis* [in changed circumstances – *translator's name*], Donald Trump uses to win some white working class people gripped by the same concerns.

Similarly, it is a matter of giving confidence to some intermediate sectors of technicians and professionals who feel panic at their proletarianization and unemployment, and resent their social position because of the long crisis. Since its beginning, more than three million people with average incomes have gone on to swell the low levels. It is to them that the technocratic speech and promotion by "merit" is addressed, as well as the flattery to the "entrepreneur." This is a message that is clearly seen in the recent education reform, which reads:

*"The curricula of the Compulsory Secondary Education and Post-Secondary Education will incorporate curricular elements oriented to the development and strengthening of the entrepreneurial spirit, to the acquisition of skills for the creation and development of various business models and to the promotion of equal opportunities and respect for the entrepreneur and the employer, as well as business ethics."*⁸

⁸ Royal Decree 1105/2014 of December 26, which established the basic curriculum of Obligatory Secondary Education and Post-Secondary Education.

In short, nationalism and racism for the working class; fear for this class and for the more traditional groups; and promises of promotion, incorporation and adulation for technicians and professionals who may be tempted to swing towards Citizens' Party. A program that is perfectly suited to the needs of restructuring the productive system and to ensure control of the social and political situation, to ensure the continuity of exploitation to the greatest possible degree.

To those "mechanisms" of hegemony must be added the pervasive propaganda about Rajoy's supposed economic successes, his tactic of resistance at all costs and delay concerning the EU, and the lack of a program of opposition put forward by the left. All this is clearing the way, as we said at the beginning, for a new PP government. It is this set of circumstances, too, that provides growing security and confidence to conservative voters, who until recently saw themselves pushed to the wall by the pressure of the innumerable cases of corruption that had been discovered.

The positive thing, however, is that many things are becoming clearer, as we pointed out at the beginning. Also to the left. Thus, the recent spectacle in the leading bodies of the PSOE is the reflection of a tension that, in one form or another, is taking place in other organizations, such as the CCOO [Workers' Councils] and also Podemos, which helps everyone to put their cards on the table.

The offensive of the old apparatus of the PSOE against its secretary general⁹ shows that former presidents Felipe González and Rodríguez Zapatero, as well as former secretary general Rubalcaba and many regional leaders, are willing to commit *hara-kiri* [suicide] in order to make the PSOE into a small but safe prop of the ultra-reactionary governments of the PP (or the PP and Citizens' Party). Its objective is purely a class one: a government that can fully implement the draconian measures demanded by capital, either through the leadership [of the EU] from Brussels or from the boards of directors of the BBVA, BSCH

⁹ To force the PP government to resign, by the abstention of the PSOE in a forthcoming session of Rajoy's taking office as head of the government. This did away with the already weak credibility of the PSOE among the electorate as a left option.

[large banks in Spain – *translator's note*, and other elements of the Ibex 35¹⁰ ... and still maintaining their personal perks, of course. To sum up, the leaders learned long ago that to have a chance to return to the government they had to demonstrate their loyalty to capital. They also have the example of the SPD [Social Democratic Party of Germany], which despite being little more than an auxiliary of the CDU [Christian Democratic Union of Germany], has been able to accede to power, although a much shorter period than the Christian Democrats for a total of 20 years since 1949.

For his part, Pedro Sanchez is defending the survival of his organization, trying to show an identity distinct from both the PP and Podemos, although ultimately the objective is equally to sustain the regime (for the "left"). Its problem is that, besides having a internal powerful enemy, its credibility is reduced by the ne-liberal orientation pact signed at the beginning of this year with the Citizens' Party.

The possible Pasokization [from the party Pasok in Greece – *translator's note*] of the PSOE would make Podemos into the left anchor of the monarchical regime. Maybe that is why lately two positions seem to be emerging within it, reminiscent of what is happening in Sanchez's party: that of Iñigo Errejón, determined to expand his electoral base at any cost to gain power, and that of Pablo Iglesias, who seems more concerned with maintaining a minimum left identity. It is a matter of becoming a support of the regime, but not as far to the right as has finished off the PSOE.

In the union Workers' Commission, finally, something similar is happening. The pressures arising from the crisis have also made a good part of the apparatus understand that is necessary to renew and strengthen the organization (if only to maintain its role as legitimizer of the system), against adventurist appeasement of some leaders to whom it seems to matter more to give their unconditional support to the State of the oligarchy in order to take on a negotiating role that, in fact, they no longer have.

¹⁰ The IBEX 35 is the main index of the Spanish stock market and is made up of the 35 companies with the greatest liquidity that are listed with the four Spanish stock markets.

Anyway, in the dilemma between giving unconditional support to the oligarchy or maintaining their sense of identity, it will be more difficult to take on ambiguous positions. That may encourage debate and therefore form the kernel of rebuilding something that was interrupted in 2014, and to build a new hegemony, around a program of breaking with the monarchy and the regime of domination that it symbolizes. Therefore, we must develop the "cultural" struggle, the ideological fight, for a hegemony very different from that advocated by the populists of Podemos: one that develops around a social "core" formed by the proletariat, and around the political objective of toppling the monarchy to seize power, a "strong" political program but one that connects with the everyday concerns of the proletariat.

But that – the building of that hegemony and the struggle for power – also demands organization and mobilization, in order to renew the socialization and struggle. These are the tasks of the Spanish Communists in the present time.

September 2016

Tunisia

Workers' Party of Tunisia

Hamma Hammami

On the Current Situation in the Middle East and North Africa

Every contemporary history of the Arab peoples is summed up in a certain way, in a series of attempts at liberation, sometimes abortive, sometimes stopped half way, but rarely victorious. Since the time of Mohamed Ali Pasha in the 19th century in Egypt, each time an Arab country or people wakes up, to modernize its political, economic and social system and to win its freedom, the imperialist forces intervene in collusion with local or regional reactionary forces to stop or at least slow down its momentum by force. The goal was always to leave the people of this region completely backward, divided and subjected in order to exploit and plunder their wealth, especially after the discovery of oil and the establishment of the Zionist entity on Palestinian land.

1.

What has been taking place in the Arab countries since 2011 is not outside of this historical framework. When the Tunisian people ousted their dictator on January 14, 2011, and other Arab peoples, such as the Egyptian, Moroccan, Libyan, Syrian, Yemeni, Bahraini peoples and others, wanted to follow their example, this was only the expression of an objective situation which continues to call for or rather to demand change. Despite abundant natural resources, an exceptional strategic position and a civilization that has contributed much to the progress of humanity, especially during the Middle Ages, it is in this region of the world where there still exist the most archaic, most repressive and most corrupt political systems; this is where the rates of illiteracy and ignorance, unemployment and social inequality are the highest. This is also where women are the most oppressed in the world, suffering from medieval practices, from polygamy to the most barbaric genital mutilation (female circumcision, etc.). Finally, this is where imperialism and its creation, Zionism, exert an un-

precedented oppression, imposing on the entire region a state of permanent war, preventing the Arab peoples from living in peace, from devoting themselves to the development of their country and achieving national unity.

This is the objective situation, and nothing else, which pushed the Arab peoples to revolt at the beginning of the third millennium. All the “theories” that explain the revolt as a plot fomented by foreign intelligence services, especially of the US, and prepared in advance by groups of internet users in the pay of these services in order to redraw the map of the Middle East, aim to obscure the objective causes of the revolts of the Arab peoples. They also aim to ridicule these peoples, to deny their long heroic struggle to free themselves from their local and foreign oppressors (it is enough to mention the names of the Algerian Emir Abdelkader, of the Tunisian Ali Ben Ghedhahem of the 19th century, and the Moroccan Abdelkrim El Khattabi and the Libyan Omar Mukhtar in the 20th century, and many other figures from the national and trade union struggle, etc.) to present them as lesser peoples not yet ready for freedom, democracy and progress, easily manipulated, unable even to create their own history, who remain dependent on the will of foreign powers. Still worse, we should remember that the dictators deposed by their peoples, such as Ben Ali or Mubarak, were only lackeys of the Western imperialists, who had no interest in losing them.

Some of those who spread the theory of a “plot” ask why the revolution has not affected the most reactionary countries such as the Gulf countries, whose states keep their people in medieval servitude? Isn’t this a strong argument, in their opinion, which supports their thesis? These people forget that oppression, corruption, nepotism and ferocious exploitation do not mechanically create the revolution. This occurs only when the people subjected to oppression are resolved to fight their oppressors. Indeed it is no coincidence that the countries in which the peoples have risen up, from Bahrain to Tunisia and from Morocco to Egypt, all have traditions of struggle. This having been said, for Saudi Arabia and its accomplices it is only a postponement, a matter of time, and it will not be long until the revolutionary whirlwind reaches them and prevails in the near future.

2. Revolutions without Leadership

Moreover, the Arab revolts have not all gone through the same evolution. Also, the foreign forces did not hesitate to intervene in this process at one point or another. Apart from the internal factors, any revolution is also linked to external factors whose impact, both positive and negative, depends on the internal situation and therefore on the actual relation of forces within the society concerned. Finally, a revolution is not always victorious. For a revolution to succeed certain objective but also subjective conditions must be met. But if a revolution fails, this does not prevent it from still being considered a revolution. But an abortive revolution. We often forget that many revolutions, among others in Europe, failed. Even worse, revolutions like those of 1830 and 1848 in France led to a result quite opposite from the desired goal for which the people shed their blood. If a revolution fails, generally, the restoration is established.

As I pointed out above, the Arab revolutions have not all gone through the same evolution. We can classify them into at least three or four groups. In the first group we find Tunisia and Egypt. The peoples of these two countries succeeded, at first, in driving out their own dictators and grasp, at least, their freedom, even if power remained basically in the hands of the old ruling classes. This was a victory that inspired other peoples in the region.

The second group consists of Bahrain and Morocco. Popular uprisings broke out in both countries but they were very quickly repressed. In Bahrain, it is Saudi Arabia that took care of it for



fear that the Shiite majority would take power and increase Iran's influence in the region. In Morocco, the Makhzen¹ crushed the youth movement of February 20, 2011, and prevented it from developing by taking the initiative to revise the constitution and enact some small reforms to calm the political and social tension.

In the third group are Libya, Syria and Yemen. The first two countries, governed by authoritarian and despotic regimes, at the beginning went through peaceful popular uprisings demanding freedom and social justice. But very soon events took the form of a destructive civil war. Two factors contributed to this change. The repressive and sometimes bloody reaction of the regimes in power and the foreign military intervention: direct in Libya through NATO and indirect, at the beginning, in Syria, through the obscurantist and fascist militia, recruited from inside and outside the country and comprising "Daesh,"² "Al Nusra" and other terrorist groups.

The rest is known. Gaddafi was hunted down and killed; Libya has sunk into chaos and is threatened by divisions and new foreign interventions. In the absence of a state that runs the country and ensures the safety of its citizens and its territory, Libya has become, for now, the focus of terrorist groups of all kinds and a source of destabilization for its neighbors.

The civil war in Syria is continuing for the fifth year, resulting in hundreds of thousands of victims and millions of refugees whom German capitalism and its peers in Europe and elsewhere are using. Syria has become an issue in which regional and international powers interfere. Already the great powers are there and are intervening in the name of the fight against terrorism that some of them, namely the major Western powers, have created, trained, armed and encouraged. Peace and stability in this country will not come soon. Much blood will still flow, many lives will be lost before the weapons are silent, unless the valiant people of Syria awake, take control of their destiny and put an end to the catastrophe.

¹ Makhzen: An Arabic term that means a fortified place, warehouse, etc. Today it is applied to the dictatorial apparatus of the Moroccan State [*translator's note*].

² Initials in Arabic for the Islamic State – *translator's note*.

Yemen has gone through two phases. When the Yemeni people rose up in 2011 against the reactionary and corrupt regime of Ali Abdullah Salah, local and regional pressures, especially from the Gulf countries, forced him to leave and cede power to his deputy Mansour Hadi. But the crisis broke out again due to social problems. This civil war takes the form of a sectarian war between Sunni and Shia with a direct armed intervention of 10 Sunni Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia, to stop the march of the “Houthis” supported by the Iranians. Yemen has become the scene of a destructive regional war and nothing indicates that the hostilities will end soon.

To summarize, the region of the Middle East and North Africa have entered a phase of great turbulence. If today none of the Arab revolutions have been able to reach their goal and in more than one case, the peoples have found themselves in dire situations, it is because all these revolutions have been characterized by spontaneity; which facilitates the task of the counter-revolution, which has taken more than one form.

A victorious revolution is one in which power passes from the hands of the former reactionary classes into the hands of the insurgent class or classes. This assumes that the latter, that is, the classes who revolted, have their own political leadership. Unfortunately, this political leadership has been lacking in all the revolutions and uprisings of the Arab peoples. This is what explains the various evolutions that the region has gone through and is still going through. When revolutionary leadership is lacking, the revolution may fail. Worse still, it may diverge from its goal and the peoples can even momentarily pay a heavy price for their struggles that have not reached their ultimate goal. As Marx pointed out, they may even find themselves faced with more serious and more dangerous situations than before the revolution.

The revolutionary forces in the Arab world are in most cases weak, divided and far from being rooted in the reality of their country in order to lead the working class and broad masses in general and show them the road to be followed. It is this weakness that has deprived the Arab peoples from gathering the fruit of their rebellions and revolutions. It is this weakness that has also paved the way for local and foreign reactionary forces to maneuver and plot against the revolution in general.

In some countries, such as Tunisia and Egypt, it has led to the rise of the “Muslim Brotherhood” to abort the revolution and safeguard the interests of capital. When they failed, the military took power in Egypt and prevented the development of the popular movement that fought them. In Tunisia, where the democratic and progressive movement, headed by the Popular Front, is stronger and more organized, an appeal was made to the liberals to govern, even if it was together with the Islamists. In other countries such as Libya but also Syria and Iraq, the door is open to different “Salafist” counter-revolutionary and fascist groups to divide, terrorize and especially distort the true struggle of the Arab people by giving it a sectarian character.

If “Daesh,” the most criminal and most dangerous detachment of the counter-revolution, was able to extend its influence over a large territory in Syria and Iraq and several other countries, this is mainly thanks to the money, weapons and media provided by the reactionary Gulf countries: Saudi Arabia first, as home to Wahhabi reaction, and Turkey and the direct and indirect explicit support of the Western imperialists, U.S., French and others. These are planning, 100 years after the Sykes-Picot agreement, a new division of the region on sectarian and ethnic lines, dismantling existing states, reshaping them again and dividing them into a number of new entities, weak and easily manipulated.

So as you can see, the bourgeoisie of the “Enlightenment” is not ashamed to appeal to the most barbaric and most obscurantist forces to block the road of freedom and modernity of the Arab peoples. This bourgeoisie, which is organized in the framework of the national state, as well as the imperialist bourgeoisie, is doing everything today to destroy the state in the Arab world and replace it with sectarian entities devoid of the most basic foundations of the state in the modern sense. This is also a sign that a new human civilization is beginning to emerge today, to replace that of the bourgeoisie that has nothing positive to offer humanity.

Qatar and Turkey have become the advocates of the Muslim Brotherhood but also of “Salafist” terrorist and obscurantist groups in Syria. At a certain point, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have united to oppose the Muslim Brotherhood and to support the army in Egypt, for fear of being affected by the changes that are shaking the region. But they are all together

against the Syrian regime. With the exception of Turkey, they are all waging war against the “Houthis” in Yemen to counter Iranian influence, which is already strong in Iraq.

The Zionist entity “*al-kayan al-Sahyūnī*” is closely following events and is intervening whenever its interests require. It takes advantage of the situation to further oppress the Palestinian people and occupy and Judaize their land. The US imperialists are in the lead in more than one way. They are doing everything with a single goal: to watch over their interests, protect “Israel” maintain their lackeys in the Gulf in power and prevent their Russian and Chinese competitors and the Iranian ally of the latter from gaining ground.

These last countries, in turn, are trying to extend their influence in the region, to bring about a redivision of spheres of influence. Indeed, they have capital to invest, goods and arms to sell, strategic areas that they want to control. In short, this is a situation full of dangers for the peoples of the region and first of all for the Arab peoples, but also for the peoples all over the world.

In all this, a great responsibility lies with the revolutionary forces, especially those on the left.

3.

However, this situation should not make us believe that it is a wasted effort for the Arab peoples and revolutionaries. For the Arab peoples, this is just a new phase in their history that is opening up. And it will not be easy to prevent them from realizing their dream of living in peace, of enjoying their freedom and exercising their sovereignty over their wealth in order to make this the basis of their development and achieve the social justice to which they aspire.

Today the Arab peoples are not yet well prepared for this, but we are confident they will never give up. Besides the political, social and community movements are breaking out in Iraq and Lebanon. The Palestinian people are rising up again. The Moroccan and Algerian peoples have not given up, the Libyan people are not afraid to drive out “Daesh”. The democratic and progressive forces in Egypt are refusing to allow the army to rob them of their revolution, etc. In Tunisia, the revolutionary and popular movement is resisting the counter-revolution.

Faced with the general crisis that is looming in the Arab countries, the democratic and progressive forces, particularly the forces of the revolutionary left, are called upon, for their part, to take up their responsibility by organizing themselves into parties and organizing their peoples around clear, patriotic anti-imperialist, democratic, secular and progressive programs and fronts of struggle: popular, democratic or patriotic fronts, depending on the particular situation in each country, while considering the creation of an Arab framework of coordination. It is very urgent and very necessary to lessen the gap between the objective factor that is ripe for change and the subjective factor that is very much behind. It is a hard task but one that we must be bold enough to begin.

The question of power should not be postponed indefinitely; rather it should be at the center of attention of the revolutionary forces that should develop strategies and tactics necessary to accomplish this task. Life has shown that in several countries, particularly in my own country Tunisia, not to mention others, the question of power is raised as a question to be resolved practically, but due to lack of preparation the opportunity has been missed.

The revolutionary, democratic and progressive forces in the capitalist countries of Europe, the Americas and Asia have the difficult task of developing the movement of solidarity in their own countries with the Arab peoples, and primarily with the Palestinian people. The struggle of the Arab peoples is a struggle for freedom, social justice and progress. The Palestinian struggle is a struggle for national liberation. These struggles are not religious or sectarian struggles; it is the imperialists and reactionaries who want to push them in that direction to divert and divide those who have every interest in putting an end to oppression and exploitation, who have every interest in getting out of the darkness of the Middle Ages.

The revolutionary forces of the imperialist countries should understand that every victory of the Arab peoples will only weaken their own oppressors and facilitate their task of doing away with them.

August 2016

Turkey

Labour Party

Alternating Between a Coup and a Dictatorship

Traditionally the army has been one of the most important actors in Turkey since the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Republic. The army having significant political power has its roots in the fact that the founders of the Republic, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, came from the army.

However, the main factor making this power permanent was the fact that capitalism in Turkey developed with a bureaucratic character, through a bourgeoisie which was strengthened by the use of state incentives, and as a result of the foreign dependency of this development, monopoly capital was interlinked with the highest ranks of bureaucracy to form the financial oligarchy. In other words, the financial oligarchy in Turkey was the product of monopoly capital and high level bureaucrats.

OYAK, which began modestly as a pension fund for the Turkish Army and grew to be a strong corporation with a turnover of 23 billion Turkish lira (about \$10 billion dollars) in 2015, is among the 10 biggest monopolies in the country. This alone shows the link between the bureaucracy and capital. As well as its financial and administrative autonomy, free from all control, the army has long been a political actor with the authority to seize political power with the excuse of “*eliminating threats to national security*”.

Turkey has undergone a number of military coups to secure the interests of international capital and US imperialism. The most significant one was the 12 September 1980 coup which aimed to suppress the escalating popular struggle and pave the way for the neoliberal restructuring that was initiated earlier that year.

Turkey is a dependent capitalist country but has the second biggest army in NATO. Despite the Erdogan-AKP government’s claims about “*having put an end to the military tutelage*”, the country witnessed another coup attempt on 15 July 2016. This

proves that the threat of a military coup is still present due to the bases of the regime and the policies of the government, which is fast advancing on the way to becoming an overt dictatorship in the name of “*fighting against the coup threat*”.

One of the most striking aspects of the 15 July coup attempt was the fact that it was a result of a conflict within the Islamist-conservative bourgeois forces that got stronger following the 1980 coup and came to power in the early 2000s. In order to understand the fight between these two cliques, one led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the other by Fethullah Gulen, a cleric who is self-exiled in the US, one needs to examine the conditions of these forces coming to power.

The neoliberal restructuring period following the 1980 coup witnessed the rise of Islamist capital in cooperation with Arab-Gulf (Qatari, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabian) capital. However, the Islamist-conservative forces that came to power in the early 2000s had more to do with the new tendencies in the Middle East policies of US imperialism and the other imperialist monopolies than with internal developments. Indeed, the US had a new intervention strategy for the Middle East and North Africa following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc.



Tayyip Erdogan & Fethullah Gulen

Using the excuse of the September 11 attacks, many aspects of which are still unknown, the US declared “*radical Islamist terror organisations*”, especially Al Qaida, which it once supported in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, to be new threats. In line with this, the Greater Middle East Project was put on the agenda in order to eliminate this threat and redesign the region by backing so-called “moderate Islam”, the liberal Islamist forces that were collaborating with the US.

Just as in other countries neighbouring the USSR, the Islamist forces in Turkey were supported as part of the *Green Belt Project* of the 1950s against the “*threat of communism*”. In Turkey, the process of these forces becoming more than an “auxiliary force” for bourgeois reactionary sections and their coming to power was connected with this new strategy of US imperialism.

As former CIA Middle East chief Graham Fuller states in his book ‘*The Future of Political Islam*’, the US implemented the policy of supporting “*liberal and reformist Islamist forces such as Fethullah Gulen*”. Among them was Tayyip Erdogan, who founded the “*moderate Islamist*” AKP, the Justice and Development Party, after his position as the chief of the Istanbul Municipality.

Gulen advised his followers to position themselves within the state institutions and it was these cadres who backed Erdogan in his rise to power. He was portrayed as “*a leader from among the people*” and his party won the elections in 2002. Although he kept his distance later, until 2004-05 Prime Minister Erdogan bragged about being “*the co-chair of the Great Middle East Project*”, which manifested the power that was behind his rise to power.

As a reaction to the support given by the US and international capital to neoliberal Islamist-conservative forces in Turkey, there emerged a pro-Eurasian tendency, favouring stronger cooperation with Russia and China rather than with the US, within some sections of the traditional bourgeois forces as well as the bureaucracy and the army.

For the US-backed Islamist-conservative bourgeois forces to seize power completely, they needed to purge these pro-Eurasian

‘nationalists’ who were later to be called “pro-Ergenekon”¹. To this end, a judicial liquidation process was launched against them, especially those connected to the army, under the pretext that they were planning a coup against the AKP government (and the Gulen Movement). The Gulenists who were largely positioned in the police force and the judiciary led this liquidation process.

The government turned down the public’s demand that the so-called Ergenekonists, many of whom had played a role in the war against the Kurds in the 1990s and who were responsible for many counter-guerrilla killings, be held accountable for those crimes as well as for their alleged coup plans. This proved once again that the government was only interested in eliminating the barriers in its way rather than securing democracy, contrary to the claims of some left and right wing liberal circles at the time.

Another important development of that period was the purge of the political representatives of the Kurdish national movement and the elected mayors in the Kurdish regions, using the excuse of “PKK-KCK operations”.

The US aimed to use its intervention in Iraq in 2003 as a step to further interventions in other countries in the region, such as Iran and Syria. However, in 2005-06 the US began to talk about withdrawing from Iraq, much less intervening in other countries, because it was almost sinking into a quagmire. The US thought it could use Turkey in this process of withdrawal as a “regional power” to “pull its chestnuts out of the fire”.

However, Turkey was in conflict with the PKK, the Kurdish national movement, and as an armed force its presence was considered to be a threat in northern Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Gov-

¹ **Ergenekon** was the name given to an alleged clandestine, secularist ultra-nationalist organization in Turkey with possible ties to members of the country’s military and security forces. It was claimed to have secretly organised within the state to topple the government. Investigations were launched in 2007 and many soldiers, police officers, journalists, academics, etc. were arrested on the basis of these claims. The court hearings went on for years and finally the case collapsed last April following the fallout between President Erdogan and Gulen.

ernment), which is a crossroad for oil and gas. Therefore, while on the one hand the government took some symbolic steps, such as forming a Kurdish TV channel, to appear as if it was trying to solve the Kurdish question, on the other hand, a political liquidation process was in force to give it the upper hand.

In this period, the Gulen-Erdogan alliance not only purged their political opponents, but also carried out an unprecedented neoliberal transformation. 124 public companies were privatised from 2003-13, the first 10 years of AKP rule, as opposed to 56 from 1993-2003. This included the privatisation of the biggest and most important enterprises in the telecommunication, refinery and petro-chemical industries. Out of the \$49 billion dollars worth of privatisation from 1985 to 2013, \$41 billion dollars of it took place under AKP rule. This alone explains the reason why the AKP government was backed by the US-EU monopolies for a long time.

This privatisation process included the public services, especially education and health care. Also, in the name of “*growth*”, capital was provided with the opportunity for an unbridled exploitation of the working class, depriving them of all kinds of social rights and job security. As a result of this, work-related deaths reached unprecedented levels – over 17,000 from 2003-16, most of them of undocumented-uninsured workers. Even when 301 coal miners died in Soma in May 2014, the government stood with the bosses, and Erdogan said “*it was in the nature of this work*”.



During this period, the owners of capital linked with AKP-Gulen grew fast. Their organisations gained strength and became an alternative force to Turkey's biggest and most established industry and business association, TUSIAD. Government contracts and credits played an important role in their fast growth in Turkey, where government spending takes up to one third of the national income, which was more than \$250 billion dollars in 2015.

However, as they eliminated their political rivals and strengthened their basis in terms of capital, the power struggle between these two Islamist-conservative forces became more obvious. The first significant conflict appeared in the National Intelligence Agency (MIT), which became something more than an intelligence agency in 2007 and became an "operational" force for a more proactive foreign policy. In February 2012, the Gulenists in the judiciary called Hakan Fidan, the MIT chief, to provide evidence about the secret negotiations held in Oslo with the PKK. Their aim was to seize control of the agency by arresting Fidan, whom they held responsible for the deterioration of relations with Israel (because of letting a flotilla go to Gaza despite Israel's embargo) and for developing trade links with Iran despite the sanctions.

However, with Erdogan's intervention this attempt failed. Erdogan stepped in to close down Gulenist schools, one of their strongest areas. Gulenists responded to this by leaking secretly recorded audio tapes revealing the involvement in corruption by Erdogan and his close circle. This was followed by the Gulenists in the police force and judiciary launching operations on 17th and 25th of December 2013 against those who were involved in corruption, which included some members of the cabinet and their families. Erdogan's response to these operations was to purge numerous Gulenists in the police force and the judiciary. In this process AKP-Erdogan accused the Gulenists, with whom they were in alliance in government for 11 years, of forming a parallel state and began to describe it as "an armed terrorist organisation".

The developments in the Middle East and the government's policies in the region had a catalytic effect on the conflict between Erdogan and the Gulenists and on this conflict evolving into a sharp stage such as a coup attempt. Following the first stages of the intervention attempt in Syria the distance between the policies of AKP-Erdogan and those of US-Western imperial-

ists widened, and this encouraged the Gulenists against Erdogan. This prepared the grounds for the US-West to use the Gulenists against Erdogan, and for the Gulenists to use this backing to attempt to seize power.

As is known, the popular uprisings that started in Tunisia and then Egypt in late 2010 and early 2011 not only resulted in ousting the dictators but also spread to other Arab countries. In the meantime, the imperialist powers acted quickly to use these uprisings, which demanded “bread”, “honour” and “freedom”, to redesign these regions in line with their interests.

The first step in this direction was the overthrowing of the Kaddafi regime in Libya in October 2011 by forces backed by NATO. This was followed by the intervention in Syria. The aim was to oust the Assad regime, which would then lead to the disintegration of the Russian and Chinese supported Iran-Syria-Hezbollah-Hamas alliance, which was considered to be “an axis of resistance” against US-Western imperialists. This would lead to the encirclement of Hezbollah, which functioned as a border post against Israel, and which would in turn make Iran an open target.

In Turkey, on the other hand, because of its ambition to become the leader of the Islamic world and the policy of “new Ottomanism” as an expression of the expansionist tendencies of the big bourgeoisie, the AKP-Erdogan government took the initiative to be the leading force in the intervention in Syria. Initially, the biggest supporter of this was the Western imperialists, especially US and France, which had given Turkey the role of “*regional leadership*”. The partners of AKP-Erdogan in this intervention policy were Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which needed Syria to transport their own oil and gas reserves to the Mediterranean.

In order to get the backing of the Sunni majority of the Islamist countries, the struggle for hegemony in Syria between the US and the Western powers on the one hand and Russia and China on the other was placed on a sectarian divide, posing it as a fight between Sunnis and Shias, and this led to the pouring of radical Islamist militants all over the world into Syria for “*jiḥad*”. Turkey was both the biggest supporter and the most important transit country for those militants. The sectarian rhetoric made

the Al Qaeda-linked or orientated radical Islamist mob take the upper hand in the fight against the regime in Syria.

In Egypt, the US first backed the Muslim Brotherhood but later ousted them with the Sisi coup, and in Libya, those Islamist forces that it supported killed its ambassador. Witnessing a shifting orientation in its intervention policy, the US retreated from it. This was because the radical Islamists were gaining strength and this posed a risk for the US presence in the region and for Israel's security. Moreover, Sunni radicalism was threatening the US-established order in Iraq.

Despite the US retreat, the Erdogan government did not refrain from cooperation with the Al-Qaeda linked Al-Nusra Front and ISIS in Syria. It also continued to incite Sunnis against the central government in Iraq, which led to the fall of Mosul to ISIS. For Erdogan and his allies (Saudi Arabia and Qatar), the overthrow of the Assad regime in Syria was inevitable for the success of their struggle for hegemony in the region against Iran. The formation of self-ruled Kurdish cantons in northern Syria (Rojava) was making it more difficult for Erdogan to carry on his reactionary policies on the Kurdish question domestically.

Late 2013 and early 2014 was when Turkey's regional foreign policy began to cause problems for the US, which brought the two powers to confront each other somehow. This was also when the dogfight between Erdogan and the Gulenists intensified. The US strategy to "*fight against ISIS*", implemented first in Iraq in 2014 and then in Syria, led to its cooperation with the Kurds, which was the chief force in this fight. This caused a lot of problems in Turkey. However, the main development that brought Turkey's regional policy to a near-collapse was in fact Russia's intervention in Syria in September 2015, which targeted not only ISIS but also all other Islamist mobs, a great number of which were supported by Turkey.

Russia's intervention strengthened the Assad regime. The Erdogan-AKP government responded to this by shooting down a Russian jet on the Turkish-Syrian border in November 2015. Erdogan expected to get NATO backing for this action. However, NATO's support was limited to a statement.

Russia, on the other hand, turned this incident into an opportunity for opening two new military bases in Syria, one in Latakia

and one in Homs, in addition to its naval base in Tartus, and deployed S-300 and S-400 missiles systems to those bases.

Turkey was left with very little room for manoeuvre in Syria. Another incident that caused Turkey's retreat in the region was when it was forced because of the reactions to withdraw its soldiers and tanks from a military camp in Mosul, which were initially sent in support of Sunni forces there.

By the end of 2015, Turkey's position in the region was as follows: As a result of the Russian intervention it had lost much of its footing in Syria. Furthermore, it was confronted by Russia after the shooting down of its jet. Because of the polarisation in Syria, its relations with Iran have long been tense. Iraq's central government was also unhappy with Turkey because it interfered in its internal affairs and incited the Sunnis. Because of Erdogan's support to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the political relations between the Sisi government and Turkey were suspended. Another suspension was with Israel since 2010. When further steps by the US and Western imperialists in the region were blocked by Russian intervention, they have limited, even withdrawn the support they had given to the Erdogan government which played a significant role in the emergence of ISIS as a new problem.

These policies no doubt had a huge economic cost. Turkey's most important sources of investment and income, tourism and construction, have decreased significantly. Moreover, \$30 billion dollars worth of annual trade with Russia came to a standstill due to tense economic and political relations with that country.

Erdogan's government was in an economic and political deadlock.

With his book '*Strategic Depth*', Ahmet Davutoglu was the theoretician and an implementer of the regional expansionist policy but he failed to meet the expectations of Erdogan and the Turkish bourgeoisie, and was removed as Prime Minister and replaced by Binali Yildirim, one of Erdogan's most loyal followers.

With the arrival of Yildirim, the Erdogan-AKP government adopted a policy to "*increase friends*" in order to overcome the deadlock in foreign policy. Towards his final days Davutoglu had taken steps in this direction, i.e. the airbases were opened to the

US in the fight against ISIS, and a “Migrant Exchange Deal” was signed in line with EU expectations. Despite this, Erdogan was still deemed unreliable by the US and Western imperialists; hence the relations with Israel, a country he previously labelled as a “*terrorist state*”, were normalised again, with Erdogan saying “*we need each other*”. Furthermore, following the downing of the Russian jet, having previously said “*if necessary we would do it again*”, Erdogan took steps towards normalising relations with Russia with a letter of apology to Vladimir Putin. In line with Putin’s conditions, he accepted a resolution in Syria without Assad’s departure, and started secret negotiations with the Syrian regime through Iran. In these negotiations, the central point was the cooperation against the Kurds, also a sensitive issue for Iran.

Erdogan government has been trying to use the ‘normalisation’ of relations with Russia and Iran as a trump card against the US and Western imperialists. Erdogan formed an alliance against the Gulenists with the ‘nationalist and pro-Eurasian’ forces (the so-called Ergenekonists) within the military and the bureaucracy, and with this manoeuvre (pro-Eurasian tendency) he is trying to force the US and the West to accept him.

This was the climate in foreign policy before the attempted coup on 15 July, and Erdogan pursued a domestic policy based on creating tension and division to achieve his ‘presidential system’ based on one-man dictatorship. Following the elections on 7 June 2015, where the Kurdish vote and the support of labour and democratic forces pushed the HDP past the electoral threshold of 10%, costing the AKP its majority in the parliament, ISIS suicide bomb attacks began in the country.

Erdogan also restarted the war with the Kurds, escalating nationalism and chauvinism. In the elections on 1 November 2015, held in conditions of war and chaos, the AKP majority in the parliament was re-established. Despite failing to achieve the majority needed for the Presidency, Erdogan declared a de facto change in the system. Despite his confrontational position towards some capital groups within the biggest employers’ organisation in the country, the “private employment bureaus” law, one of the biggest attacks against the Turkish working classes in history, was passed. Workers could now be hired temporarily through these bureaus; in other words, they could be made to

work in virtual conditions of slavery, without social security or union representation.

One significant outcome of this policy of conflict and tension has been the increased political power of the military, which Erdogan called for to besiege cities with tanks and cannons and gave immunity in the fight against the Kurds. Gulenist infiltrators among the police and the judiciary had mostly been eliminated but they still held considerable power in the military. This led to the attempted coup by the Gulenists and their military collaborators on 15 July, whom Erdogan was preparing to dispose of in August 2016. Following the attempted coup, the arrest of many generals – as plotters – in charge of the war in Kurdish cities indicates that the war was one of the factors that paved the way for the coup attempt.

The attempted coup of 15 July seemed to be an attempt without any base outside the army. Furthermore, the majority of the population was aware – through previous experiences – that military coups meant more authoritarian policies and economic hardship, and Erdogan had great support among nationalist-conservative circles due to his divisive policies. This led to the rapid defeat of the coup attempt with the support of people in the streets. How much and on what level this coup was supported by the US can be argued. One thing is for sure: the US received intelligence about the coup attempt no later than the Turkish intelligence but refused to provide Erdogan the support he expected. Now, the Erdogan leadership is in a dispute with the US on the extradition of Fethullah Gülen, claiming that he is “number one” in this failed attempt. The US and the EU are the target of harsh criticisms – even being blamed for supporting the coup – by media groups supporting Erdogan.

Erdogan successfully mobilised the public to join “*guarding of democracy*” meetings in all cities in order to cement public reaction against the coup attempt. Having obscured the fact that this attempt was the result of a confrontation between two reactionary cliques or powers in the country, Erdogan declared himself a “*hero of democracy*”. Creating the impression that anyone in opposition to him is undemocratic, he uses the coup attempt to serve his political aims. He even describes it a “*gift from god*” and uses it as an opportunity to build a dictatorship regime, some-

thing he tried earlier with the help of a policy based on tension and conflict but faced difficulties at every turn.

Declaring a State of Emergency and running the country through emergency decrees, the Erdogan/AKP government has already achieved gains, including the restructuring of the government. The nationalist-chauvinist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) directly supported Erdogan's policies, while the inconsistent policies of the main "*social democratic*" opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) made Erdogan's job very easy. The CHP got dragged into a position of supporting the government – the real perpetrator of terror – and backed many of its policies and laws in the name of "*fighting terrorism*". This included the "*removal of parliamentary immunity for MPs*", which targeted the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HDP) and neutralised the parliament. Following the coup attempt, the CHP joined the "national alliance" called for by Erdogan. Hence, in the name of "*defending democracy*", the CHP has fallen in line behind Erdogan. On the other hand, despite its stance against the coup attempt, the HDP, the party of the Kurdish people and the third biggest party in parliament, has been marginalised by Erdogan from the start and portrayed as a target for "*supporting terrorism*".

The State of Emergency that followed the coup attempt in the "*battle against the plotters*" has opened the way for a one-man dictatorship where every declaration of Erdogan is written into legislation through an emergency decree. It was claimed that the state of emergency was a precaution only against the Gulenists, but tens of thousands of teachers and academics as well as members of the Gulen movement have been suspended. Many newspapers and TV channels were closed down for links with the Gulenists; many local newspapers and the pro-Kurdish *Özgür Gündem*, a newspaper with no links to Gulenists, have also been shut down. A number of media establishments, including the daily *Evrensel* and *Hayatın Sesi TV* – the voice of workers and labourers – have been subjected to oppression, custodies and detentions. Many intellectuals, authors and journalists have been detained for supporting these media outlets. In many Kurdish cities, mayors belonging to the Kurdish movement have also been detained. Municipal authorities in the hands of the Kurdish na-

tional movement have been taken over, with elected mayors replaced by appointed custodians.

Attacks against workers continued under the state of emergency. Many public workers, primarily in the education sector, have been suspended for membership in unions linked to the Gulen movement. The suspensions also included progressive and democratic public workers organised in KESK. Every demonstration by workers for their rights has been banned under the state of emergency. During this period the “*private insurance*” system, which dissolves workers’ social security schemes, has been widened under the name Personal Pension Insurance (BES). For millions of workers on low wages, compulsory BES cuts in wages have been introduced. Furthermore, steps have been taken for a new ‘system’ that will remove job security in public employment and replace it with one based on contracted employment. Thousands of public workers have been sacked by use of emergency decrees even before this arrangement became a law.

In attempting wide-range attacks on workers and labourers and creating new stimulus packages for investors, the government has once again shown its class character. There are also arrangements to offer to hand over big corporations – whose possessions have been confiscated due to claimed links with the Gulen movement – to those monopolies close to government.

The Erdogan/AKP government seems to have strengthened its hand in establishing a one-man, one-party dictatorship by foiling the coup attempt by its old partner and turning it to his advantage. However, all government establishments and the army have been dragged into chaos; dismissals follow one another and the whole state is being restructured, but still no one knows whom to trust and no one is confident of the fidelity of the restructuring. Weaknesses due to conflicts of interest between bourgeois reaction and the working people – prone to deepen with economic fluctuations – will increase distrust and weakness caused by the hostility within the reactionary forces. Erdogan has managed to get the backing of the majority in the face of the coup. This does not mean, however, that the gap between workers’ objective interests and their consciousness, induced by misguided perception, will never narrow; the working masses cannot be expected to always support nationalist conservative arguments.

Support for Erdogan from Russia and Iran has been one of the striking developments after 15 July. Russia wants the Erdogan government – fallen out with the US and the West – to be in a position where it will pose no obstacle, and is trying to develop relationships in this direction. Russia knows full well that roughly half of Turkey's \$300-billion-dollar international trade is with the EU and that militarily Turkey is heavily linked with the US and NATO; it is not possible for Turkey to completely break from the US-EU 'axis'.

The Erdogan government is trying to use these relations as leverage to force the US and the West into more cooperation. In the current climate the need for a redivision of the world is increasing and conflicts are escalating to this end; it is a time when the old equilibrium does not suffice and new ones need to be formed. Within the ruling classes in Turkey there have emerged new conflicts and frictions characterised by leaning towards certain imperialist powers but also by trying to carve out positions using inter-imperialist contradictions. These tendencies of "Nationalism", "pro-Eurasianism", "Americanism", etc. lead to contradictions among the ruling classes on possible relations with certain imperialists, giving rise to considerable conflicts. The attempted military coup of 15 July is one such conflict. At the moment Erdogan/AKP, in an alliance with the pro-Eurasian Er-genekonists, are attempting to gain the ability to manoeuvre by trying to balance the US and the West against Russia.

The developing situation, also with the impact of the coup attempt, has manifested itself in Turkey getting the "approval" of Russia and carrying out operations in Syria with the pretext of "fighting ISIS". The aim of 'Operation Euphrates Shield' was to place the Free Syrian Army gangs of the so-called "moderate opposition" (most of which are derivatives of al-Qaida, no different from ISIS, and some supported by the CIA) into the town of Jarablus to create a "buffer zone". Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, it was Turkey's desire to create a "buffer zone" and to use this as a base for attacks on the forces of the regime. Nevertheless, the buffer zone came to being at a time when the government was forced to change its Syrian policy because of Russia and admit the fact that its target of removing Bashar Al-Assad had no practical meaning. Even though the claimed target was

ISIS, the real aim, as demonstrated by its name, was to prevent the physical union of the Kurdish cantons of Rojova – Kobane and Afrin – in northern Syria, along the border with Turkey. The union of the Kurdish cantons and the hegemony of the Kurdish political party PYD in these territories – which follows the same political line as PKK – posed a real threat for the continuation of Erdogan’s reactionary Kurdish policies. The operation that could not be achieved through “*good relations*” with the US was made possible through “*good relations*” with Russia.

In an attempt to diffuse high tensions with Turkey, the US provided air support to the operation. Despite Turkey’s different ambition, a takeover of the ISIS-dominated areas by Turkey and the CIA-backed gangs was ultimately desirable for US. On the other hand, US cooperation with the Syrian Democratic Forces – in which the Syrian Kurdish political party PYD and its armed forces YPG are the strongest components – and the operational support provided to Turkey in Jarablus led some media circles to portray it as a clash between the CIA and the Pentagon. Yet, for the US there was no conflict. Following the Turkish intervention, the dependence of the Syrian Kurds on the US has increased; this was not a contradiction for the US but what its interests necessitated.

If Turkey attempted this operation without Russian approval, its forces would most probably have been welcomed by the Russian S-300 and S-400 rockets in Syria. In fact, Russia and Iran have only issued mild warnings on this operation. This is because even though they refrain from a direct confrontation with the Kurds, a Turkish threat against them and the prevention of united Kurdish cantons serves the interest of the two regional powers who had already achieved a desired resolution with Turkey on a transition in Syria inclusive of Assad.

After being frozen out of the Genova-3 negotiations, the Kurds and their allied forces declared a Rojava-North Syrian Democratic Confederation in March 2016. Russia and Iran were content with limiting the Kurdish strength in such a way that it could not be attributed to them. Turkey’s operation also makes it difficult for the Kurds to come up with the demand for a federation, a demand that would be tricky for the Assad regime and its supporters in the process of finding a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

It would however be misleading to expect the Kurds – one of the most progressive and democratic forces in the region – to surrender their gains so easily, or that Russia and the US which feel compelled to cooperate with the Kurds would change this policy overnight. To conclude, those powers in search of a compromise expect to see, on the one hand, a Turkey that finds it harder to avoid a possible solution following its involvement in the field, and on the other, Kurds with restricted power having to accept a resolution that would be acceptable to those imperialist powers.

It should also be mentioned that the Jarablus operation not only strengthens Turkey's regional base but also helps its domestic political aims. First of all, the air of "*victory*" makes large sectors of the population more likely to support government policies. For example, the main opposition party CHP, having long been critical of interventionist policies in Syria, has given its support to the Jarablus operation, becoming a part of the "*national unity*" policy. Hence this operation, through the air of "*victory*" and "*heroism*", serves as a domestic move to facilitate the formation of the one-man dictatorship Erdogan wants. In the current climate, it seems easier for Erdogan to build his dictatorship regime, compared with before 15 July. Nevertheless, it is still possible for Erdogan's opponents to make new moves because the policy of continuous conflict and war makes present alliances fragile and regional balances are always prone to changes.

It is clear that to prevent Erdogan from dragging the country towards a dictatorship and to not let the fights within the ruling classes determine the future of the country and people will depend on the development of the struggles of the workers and peoples, of the forces of labour, peace and democracy against these policies. It is an urgent task for the working class party and the forces of democracy to achieve the advancement of the struggle and organisation of the working class against anti-labour policies, and for the unity of all democratic forces in the struggle against fascist aggression.

September 2016

Venezuela

Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Venezuela – PCMLV

Continue Working for the Revival of the Revolutionary Popular Struggle

“What they need now, the same as the workers of all other nations, are not anarchistic phrases about revolution, but a serious, slow, stubborn, persistent and systematic work of clandestine propaganda and agitation aimed at preparing a mass uprising against their rulers” Lenin¹

In our documents we have showed clearly and forcefully that the strategic objective of the Marxist-Leninists of Venezuela is the seizure of political power through a strategy that consists in utilizing all forms of struggle. In line with this basic definition, since our First Congress we have taken up the strategic slogan: **“Socialism can only be built with the worker-peasant alliance in power and the people in arms.”** The simplicity of this statement on the strategic aspects makes it easy to understand and apply by the members, supporters and friends of the party, who find in the theses, political line, program, statutes, resolutions, political reports, editorials, articles and other forms of expression political guidelines to develop their political activity, according to their level of participation.

Our party defined as the first tactical objective of the period: **stop the imperialist offensive and create the revolutionary counter-offensive**, continuing the process of accumulation of forces, launching the slogan: **Confront imperialism with revolutionary energy and boldness!**

Economics, Politics and the State of Mind of the Masses

The low agricultural and industrial production, shortages of food and medicine, high inflation, low purchasing power of wag-

¹ Gerald Walter, *Lenin*, p. 252. Instituto del Libro, Havana. (Translated from the Spanish. Rephrased from “The Tasks of the Opposition in France,” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 127.)

es, capital flight, smuggling of extracted goods, corporate sabotage, psychological warfare, corruption, governmental inefficiency, agreements between the traditional bourgeoisie dependent on the US-EU bloc and the emerging bourgeoisie subordinated to the China-Russia bloc in order to maintain their privileges, are factors that have affected the objective and subjective situation of the Venezuelan population recently. This has led to a decrease in political participation at this time, and now these same elements, which negatively affect the people, can be the reason for a new upsurge of street fighting. Once the first impact, the ebb, has passed, one is prepared to live under new conditions, in a country that had high income and a culture totally influenced by the U.S. consumerist pattern, a change is taking place that can lead to revolutionary action if the proletarian vanguard is able to position itself as a practical leadership.

One of the reasons that led us to define the existence of an ebb phase was the decreased participation in political activities and popular mobilization, besides the fact that all the organizations with electoral aims, both of the right and of the left, except the PSUV [United Socialist Party of Venezuela] and the MUD [Democratic Unity Roundtable], lost their voter registration because they did not have the minimum number of votes. Moreover, the popular organizations lowered their level of participation and the struggles reached minimum levels in both rural and urban areas. The masses turned towards the search for food, endless lines and individual or family attempts to find food and products for personal use, which undoubtedly affects their level of political participation.

Some members have been affected by this phenomenon, showing their weakness by dedicating their activities to solving their domestic problems, neglecting their party and mass political responsibilities. The same thing has occurred to a greater extent in the social organizations, doubly affecting the masses, since they are affected by the direct economic impact and also by the weakening of a part of the vanguard.

The First National Conference of Cadres of our party, convened by the Central Committee to discuss these issues, developed a line of action under the conditions of the country, seeking to maintain the accumulation of forces and reverse the ebb, starting with actions inside the party itself, within the party structures,

the mass organizations, and also among the broad masses, achieving significant advances including actions within the structures of the party leadership itself.

The Struggles Are Reviving, We Are Overcoming the Ebb

One must fight against the limitations in the conditions of daily life and overcome them in a revolutionary way, against the giving up of gains, in order not to go back to the old direct control of the economy by US imperialism and its European partners, within the general agitation caused by the friction between the competing imperialist blocs and their local friends. This could favor a climate of overall revival of combativity, for political and economic reasons, which can help the ML organizations to put forward a truly revolutionary program. This is the only way for the broad majority to overcome the current conditions of everyday life.

In our previous article in *Unity and Struggle* we stated that there existed a mass ebb phase and the decline of organized political action since 2015. Our last Plenum in 2016 stated that there was the beginning of a political revival, seeing the first elements of a new increase in the mass movement, observable since the preparation for the recent demonstrations of September 2016 and their foreseeable advance into the months of October, November and December, especially after the beginning of classes in the universities and secondary schools continuing into 2017.



Since the end of August, with the preparatory activities for the current mobilizations and since then, we have seen the revival of street demonstrations, both of the popular movement and of the bourgeois opposition to the government, which promoted their slogans to try to draw the masses into supporting their program. One is neoliberal, promoted by the MUD using its legislative power; the other is Keynesian, promoted by the PSUV using its executive power. The government and sectors of the left have been inspiring the mobilizations against the sabotage of the right, trying to avoid an election that would favor the most reactionary sectors at this time. Meanwhile, the right is denouncing the economic situation that to a large degree they themselves have caused, and to resolve it they are promoting a change of government through the recall referendum or through violent solutions. In this situation we Marxist-Leninists are promoting our program of fighting to lay bare the reactionary character of the MUD and the reformist character of the PSUV, in order to put forward a program that can truly save the popular majority from an inevitable catastrophe in the hands of either of these two capitalist tendencies.

It is clear that every day the class contradictions are sharpening, the forces of the US-EU imperialist bloc are acting shamelessly to try to again retake total control of the economy by the representatives of the most violent reaction; within the government, this favors the position of the conciliatory and right-wing tendency, allowing for pacts of “democratic” governability between factions of the bourgeoisie, between the most reactionary sector of the government and the opposition. Given the multiclass and heterogeneous composition of the Maduro government there are those who promote reversing the nationalizations, such as former Minister Pérez Abad and Oil Minister Eulogio del Pino and also those who, within the government itself, are calling on the working class to take the offensive and establish systems of control of production through various actions. Obviously this cannot and will not end in consolidating bourgeois democratic governments such as this, because they are part of the capitalist, social-democratic arsenal, to remain in power by deceiving the workers with demagogic speeches of revolution while negotiating with the bourgeoisie to continue in power.

In the framework of these contradictions another element that must be taken into account is how the military control of strategic areas is being consolidated, including in the economy, since this institution, which has a monopoly on violence, also has internal contradictions. There are those in the military who are won over to a rupture with imperialism of the US-EU bloc, while we can say that most only hope to continue to enjoy their privileges within the current government in which they play a determining role from a national patriotic conception, which is closer to left reformism than to the reactionary right, but rejects breaking with capitalist relations of production from a proletarian perspective.

In some speeches President Maduro, threatened by the right-wing offensive and with the government beset by the economic and social reality of scarcity and lack of response, made calls to prepare for the general strike, the popular insurgency and even insurrection against the possibility of direct action by the US-EU imperialist bloc, a call that was taken up by the revolutionary popular movement to mobilize the masses and create conditions to stop the ebb and take up the popular counter-offensive.

As is known, the petty bourgeoisie resorts to this kind of approach to the working class and the people when it sees itself cornered; once it has achieved its goal, it returns again to making agreements with its bourgeois masters. This is what has often been happening in Venezuela; but the contradictions are sharpening in such a way that it is possible that a new moment of mass upsurge can lead to the verge of a revolutionary situation such as that of 2002 and break down the barriers that social democracy places before the revolutionary movement to pass over to a direct action by the masses led by the proletarian vanguard toward achieving the strategic objective.

The Fight against the US is Following the Line of a Revolutionary and Unifying Action

“The Venezuelan government, with all its contradictions and weaknesses remains, in talk, a major contender with the main imperialist power in the world, ranking among the few governments that now is denouncing and speaking out against Yankee oppression, although in reality it is developing practices of submission, while also dreaming of peace agreements to avoid clash-

es and to stay in the game of the tolerated opposition, trying to become a ‘friendly’ government, that is, one that is dependent on the various imperialist blocs.”

The struggle against US imperialism and its local representatives is something of the first order, it is one of the elements that characterizes many of the dependent countries and oppressed peoples, consolidating a policy that must be carried forward in order to build the popular front as a method the revolutionary organizations adopt in fighting to build a new society, working to unite forces against fascism, the right and imperialism, advancing decisively throughout the planet.

In Venezuela we are going through a complex economic and political situation, as we have said, due to the offensive of imperialism and the local bourgeoisie, especially in the economic sphere, the falling prices of raw materials on a world scale, the oil crisis with the fall in consumption and the incorporation of new technologies, and especially with the weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie in the government. It has not been able to strike at the economic heart of the bourgeoisie, nor to carry out an economic project relying on the ability of the people, but rather it has based itself on the civilian and military bureaucracy that knows little of the productive process, besides defending the capitalist mode of production, hindering the practical measures of a revolutionary character in order to address the current situation.

The Ebb Is Being Overcome; We Are Approach New Times of Mobilization

In answer to the threats of the right-wing opposition, the conscious popular movement has begun a process of revival that should leave behind the ebb and give way to a new period of mass upsurge, whether by responding to the economic reality or to the external and internal threats of the right-wing opposition. It is important to take advantage of this phenomenon and to join with the popular movement in all its struggles, fighting to place ourselves in the lead with our proposals and slogans in order to overcome the illusions that reformism nurtures and to organize the revolution against a right-wing offensive that threatens to turn violent. The general strike, the popular rebellion and insurrection

are concepts that we must promote among the revolutionary vanguard and the people to defeat the imperialist offensive.

We believe that the ebb and the tendency to move to the right has been held back, because to some extent the people understand that the bourgeoisie is to blame for the economic situation. The more conscious section of the masses is taking up the struggle against reaction by trying to promote popular organization and mobilization against the interests of the US-EU imperialist bloc and the local bourgeoisie. However, there still prevails a conciliatory and reformist discourse of the corrupt and demagogic petty bourgeoisie with its program of revamping dependent capitalism, replacing dependence on the US and EU with dependence on China and Russia, as well as the oil economy by the mining economy without promoting the true development of the productive forces nor the leading role of the people in production. The revolutionary vanguard, with all its dispersion and weakness, is still struggling for the leading role of the working class and peasantry, in place of the bureaucratic and corrupt petty bourgeoisie, but it will not stop fighting every day to take a leading role in the leadership of the country.

“Socialism Can Only Be Built With the Worker-Peasant Alliance in Power and the People in Arms”

*Central Committee
September 2016*

