Workers of the World, unite!

THE INTERNATIONALIST PROLETARIAN

ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

December 2021 – Issue 8 – Price: 2 € / 2,50$

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY: The line that goes from Marx to Lenin, to the foundation of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Italy (Livorno 1921); the struggle of the Communist Left against the degeneration of the International, against the theory of the "socialism in a single country" and the Stalinist counterrevolution; the refusal of the Popular Fronts and the Resistance Blocks; the hard work of restoration of the revolutionary doctrine and organ, in contact with the working class, outside the personal and electioneering politicking.

U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

On August 31, 2021, the last American soldier left Kabul airport on time, after almost 20 years of military occupation. It was the deadline of the truce granted by the Taliban for the US to completely withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. The militaristic US Democratic government was following in the footsteps of the previous Republican government, in yet another demonstration that, regardless of the intentions of individuals, it is the material reality that imposes itself. (*Continues on page 2*)

CONTENTS

Organic centralism: a vital question (I)	**p. 2**
U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan	**p. 5**
Immigration as a weapon of war	**p. 13**
Colombia: the matchstick and the boiling water	**p. 15**
Venezuela: parliamentarism drives the working class like cattle to the slaughterhouse	**p. 18**
Evolution of the largest 500 companies in Latin America	**p. 20**
The overproduction crisis leads to imperialist war	**p. 21**
With the PSOE-Unidas Podemos government the Spanish bourgeoisie remains at the forefront of world exploitation	**p. 23**
The rise and fall of bourgeois civilization (1951)	**p. 29**

COLOMBIA: THE MATCHSTICK AND THE BOILING WATER (page 15)

The petty bourgeoisie is like WATER: it can boil and do it in the most resounding way but it can never catch fire. The proletarian class is like MATCHSTICK: it appears inert and still, but it has the potential to ignite and generate a revolutionary fire. The condition for the matchstick to maintain its capacity to ignite, its revolutionary potential, is that it does not get wet with water, even if it is the most scandalous and bubbling water in the world.

THE RISE AND FALL OF BOURGEOISE CIVILIZATION (page 29)

"The leftist dike is the reformist one, and in it crowd the "popular", the artisans of opportunism, the parliamentarians and the progressive organizers; exchanging insults across the stream, both courts claim to have the recipe for the mighty river to follow its bridled and forced path.
But in the great bends the current breaks every brake, comes out of its bed and "jumps", as the Po jumped at Guastalla and Volano, in an unexpected direction, sweeping over the two sordid bands in the unstoppable wave of the subversive revolution of every ancient form of dike, molding society like the earth with a new face.

ORGANIC CENTRALISM: A VITAL QUESTION (I)

The vital question of organic centralism is always a difficult question for those who approach the Party for the simple reason that it clashes head on with the spontaneous atmosphere of the bourgeois society and with the harmful atmosphere of the supposedly alternative environments, where all the pests of the bourgeois democratic environment are cultivated - worsened -.

In order to properly approach the question we must start from the development of the approaches of organic centralism by the Communist Left in the context of the struggle within the III International against its degeneration.

The Democratic Principle (1922)

We will begin our exposition with some quotations from a Party text entitled **"The Democratic Principle"** and published in 1922 (the bolds of the quotes are ours).

"We do not attribute these capacities of the party to its particular constitution*, anymore than we do in the case of any other organization. The party may or may not be suited to its task of leading the revolutionary action of a class; it is not any political party but a precise one, namely the communist party, that can assume this task, and* ***not even the communist party is immune to the numerous dangers of degeneration and dissolution. What makes the party equal to its task is not its statutes or mere internal organizational measures. It is the positive characteristics which develop within the party because it participates in the struggle as an organization possessing a single orientation which derives from its conception of the historical process, from a fundamental programme which has been translated into a collective consciousness and at the same time from a secure organizational discipline."*** (The Democratic Principle, 1922).

That is to say, we do not consider that the Party can fulfill its function by virtue of a statutory mechanism or by the constitution of its internal organization. What really determines that the Party is up to the historical function is its own process of development in the participation in the struggles and in the action (understood in its historical sense of the great struggles since the constitution of the Party in 1848 with the Manifesto of the Communist Party and not in the immediate or vulgar "here and now"), which crystallizes in a common direction. This common direction is realized around the same conception of the historical process, the same program and a firm organizational discipline. And what are the "guarantees" of a correct outcome of this process? The same text has clarified that there are no absolute guarantees that "immunize" the Party. We will return later on this question, but we are first interested in discarding a recurrent error: the mistaken pretension that this result can be reached through the democratic mechanism.

"But as we have emphasized, ***there is no reason to raise the use of the democratic mechanism to a principle.*** *Besides its consultative functions, analogous to the legislative tasks of the state apparatus, the party has executive tasks which at the crucial moment of the struggle, correspond to those of an army and which demand maximum discipline toward the hierarchy.* ***In fact, in the complex process which has led to the formation of communist parties, the emergence of a hierarchy is a real and dialectical phenomenon which has remote origins and which corresponds to the entire past experience of the functioning of the party's mechanism.*** *We cannot state that the decisions of the party majority are* per se *as correct as those of the infallible supernatural judges who are supposed to have given human societies their leaders, like the gods believed in by all those who think that the Holy Spirit participates in papal conclaves.* ***Even in an organization like the party where the broad composition is a result of selection through spontaneous voluntary membership and control of recruitment, the decision of the majority is not intrinsically the best. If it contributes to a better working of the party's executive bodies, this is only because of the coincidence of individual efforts in a unitary and well-oriented work."*** (The Democratic Principle, 1922).

The text highlights a real historical fact and that is that the complex processes that have led to the constitution of communist parties, as well as to the conformation of their internal structures, have not been the result of democratic consultations but of real and dialectical processes that have entailed a selection (through voluntary adhesion and control of recruitment), an accumulation of experience and the exercise of the party mechanism. Even in such a Party, the majority mechanism does not necessarily lead to the correct solution and, if it does, it is not as a majority decision but because it is the result of the convergence in the concord and well directed work.

It is known, for example, that, although the "Bolsheviks" have this name because they were momentarily in the majority at the London Congress, they were quickly left in the minority and lost control of the publication of the Iskra immediately afterwards. Lenin's April Theses of 1917 are another clear example of the futility of the majority opinion. On the other hand, this is how Marx expressed himself in a letter to Engels in 1859: *"I told them straight out that we owed our position as representatives of the proletarian party* ***to nobody but ourselves****; this, however, had been endorsed by the exclusive and universal hatred accorded us by every faction and party of the old world. You can imagine how taken aback the oafs were."* (Letter from Marx to Engels, May 18, 1859, Marx and Engels Collected Works Vol. 40, p.440). Lenin expresses himself in these harsh terms in the What is to be done? (1902) in relation to the "game of democracy": *"It is a useless toy because, in point of fact, no revolutionary organization has ever practiced, or could practice, broad democracy, however much it may have desired to do so. It is a harmful toy because any attempt to practice "the broad democratic principle" will simply facilitate the work of the police in carrying out largescale raids, will perpetuate the prevailing primitiveness, and will divert the thoughts of the practical workers from the serious and pressing task of training themselves to become professional revolutionaries to that of drawing up detailed "paper" rules for election systems. Only abroad, where very often people with no opportunity for conducting really active work gather, could this "playing at democracy" develop here and there, especially in small groups (...) The only serious organizational principle for the active workers of our movement should he the strictest secrecy, the strictest selection of members, and the training of professional revolutionaries. Given these qualities, something even more than "democratism" would be guaranteed to us, namely, complete,*

comradely, mutual confidence among revolutionaries[1] *".*

It took the later disastrous experiences of the degeneration of first the Second International and then the Third International for the Left to be able to draw definitively in their full depth the lessons of the necessity of the definitive burial of the democratic mechanism and the overcoming of it through organic centralism; but certainly the previous quotes demonstrate that the disregard of any intrinsic value or principle in relation to the democratic mechanism is in the DNA of Marxism and that the conformation of the Party organ has always been seen by Marxists as the dialectical and material development of a selection process. We will return later to a crucial fact and that is that both the First, the Second and even the Third International were politically heterogeneous organizations that included in their bosom even currents that were avowedly non-Marxist.

Returning to **"The Democratic Principle"** (1922), the text states that the democratic mechanism is a mere "material accident" and in no way an "indispensable platform", it states that it is possible to get rid of democratic conventions if we have other elements of decision and resolution of problems that truly respond to the demands of the development of the party and its activity:

"But we can envisage ***a mode of organization which will be increasingly liberated from the conventions of the democratic principle****, and it will not be necessary to reject it out of unjustified fears if one day it can be shown that* ***other methods of decision, of choice, of resolution of problems are more consistent with the real demands of the party's development and its activity in the framework of history.*** *(…)* ***The democratic criterion has been for us so far a material and incidental factor*** *in the construction of our internal organization and the formulation of our party statutes; it is not an indispensable platform for them. Therefore we will not raise the organizational formula known as "democratic centralism" to the level of a principle.* ***Democracy cannot be a principle for us. Centralism is indisputably one****, since the essential characteristics of party organization must be unity of structure and action. The term* centralism *is sufficient to express the continuity of party structure in space; in order to introduce the essential idea of continuity in time, the historical continuity of the struggle which, surmounting successive obstacles, always advances towards the same goal, and in order to combine these two essential ideas of unity in the same formula,* ***we would propose that the communist party base its organization on "organic centralism".*** *While preserving as much of the incidental democratic mechanism that can be used,* ***we will eliminate the use of the term "democracy", which is dear to the worst demagogues but tainted with irony for the exploited, oppressed and cheated****, abandoning it to the exclusive usage of the bourgeoisie and the champions of liberalism in their diverse guises and sometimes extremist poses."* (The Democratic Principle, 1922).

Communist Organization and Discipline (1924)

This text is linked to the previous one: *" In one of the issues of Rassegna Comunista an article about the "democratic principle" was published, considering its application whether in the State or in the union or political organizations, and developing the demonstration* ***that for us this principle is not sustainable, whereas it can be debated whether the introduction or not of a numerical and majority democracy mechanism can be convenient, for certain organisms, in certain historical situations.***

It is implicit in Marxist thought the critique of the pompous majority illusion according to which, the correct way is always indicated by the confrontation between the ciphers of a pole in which every individual would have the same weight and influence. And this critique of the majority criterium can lead to refuse it as an illusion not only in the huge lie of the parliamentary bourgeois state but also for the functioning of the revolutionary state, and even inside the proletarian economical organisms and our own party, granting the eventuality of having adopted it in practice given the lack of a better organizational convention. ***Nobody more than us, Marxists, recognizes the importance of the function of the organized minorities and the absolute need, in the phases of revolutionary struggle, that the class and the party that conducts it work under the strict direction of the hierarchies of the organization itself and under the most solid discipline.****"* (Communist Organization and Discipline, 1924).

Starting from the concept that the numerical majority mechanism is a mere mechanism and by no means a principle, three other points are emphasized: recognition of the function of the organized minority (the Party itself in relation to the whole class!), the need for centralism and a solid discipline.

The text recalls that there is no good discipline in itself and that: *"It is therefore clear that* ***the criteria of the discipline for the discipline is, in certain situations, used by the counterrevolutionaries*** *and is used to obstruct the development that leads to the formation of the true class revolutionary Party.*

The most glorious example, of how the demagogic influence of these sophisms must be disregarded, is given by Lenin himself, who was hundred times attacked as dissolver, segregator, violator of party duties, but which continued undaunted though his way, and became with perfect logic the vindicator of the healthy Marxist principles of organic centralization in the State and in the party of the revolution.

On the contrary the most disgraceful example of the formal and bureaucratic application of the discipline is given by the vote that Karl Liebknecht considered himself forced to make on August 4th 1914 in favor of the war credits." (Communist Organization and Discipline, 1924).

Karl Liebknecht was imprisoned and murdered by the German Social Democracy for calling for revolutionary defeatism against the bourgeoisie itself, but, even so, by a formalistic, bureaucratic and... democratic application of discipline he voted in favor of the budget for Germany to enter the war.

Thus, *"The guide that links us to our revolutionary purpose* ***cannot therefore ever be provided by the formal and constant deference to the officially stated chiefs, and neither by the indispensable fulfillment of all the formalities of an elective consultation.*** *We repeat that our solution is built in a completely different and superior way".* (Communist Organization and Discipline, 1924).

The overcoming of "discipline for discipline" and of

[1] Only the opportunists (call them Stalinists, Trotskyists, Maoists or whatever you want) have been able to pervert Lenin's demand for full dedication and militant devotion to the revolutionary cause, turning it into a "professional opportunist" who lives off the organization instead of living for the revolution.

democratic deception is found in the vindication of the tactical program: *"Our opinion regarding this sort of problem is that the* ***question of organization and discipline*** *inside the communist movement cannot be resolved without keeping it* ***in close relation with the questions of theory, program and tactics.*** *"* (Communist Organization and Discipline, 1924).

At this point it is fundamental to remember what is said in "The Democratic Principle" (1922) in the sense that the Party is not an organization that receives its hierarchy from the outside, like a company, the police, the body of officials, crime, etc. The bourgeoisie sets in motion enormous masses at its service with the mechanism of dependence or economic blackmail, as well as the threat of repressive sanction. Stalinism did the same by using the Russian State against Party militants to impose its counterrevolution. Adherence to the revolutionary Party on the contrary is voluntary and the cement of our discipline must be found elsewhere.

"We have to remind, in order to begin our analysis of the issue, that communist parties are organisms of ***"voluntary"*** *adhesion. This is a fact inherent to the historical nature of parties, and not the acknowledgement of some* ***"principle"*** *or* ***"model"****. It is for granted that we cannot force anyone to take our member card, we cannot make a conscription of communists, we cannot establish sanctions against the person that does not act uniformly towards the internal discipline: all of our members are materially free to leave us whenever he or she wants. We do not want to state now whether it is desirable or not things to be this way: the fact is that they are so and that there are no ways apt to change them. As a consequence, we cannot adopt the formula, certainly rich in many advantages, of the absolute obedience in the execution of orders coming from above".* (Communist Organization and Discipline, 1924).

The text has already advanced the vital importance of the tactical program: *"There is no mechanical discipline good for the execution of superior orders or dispositions "whatever they are": ****there is an ensemble of orders and dispositions that respond to the real origins of the movement that can guarantee the maximum of discipline,*** *that is, of unitary action of the whole organism, whereas there are other directives which emanate from the center that can compromise discipline and organizational solidity".* (Communist Organization and Discipline, 1924).

There are orders and dispositions that correspond to the theory, to the program, to the tactical lessons of the defeats and counterrevolutions suffered. These orders and dispositions are accepted and carried out by the militancy as a whole because they are coherent with the doctrine-program-tactics nucleus. When these orders and dispositions are carried out, the militants who carry them out and the rest of the organization feel reflected and identified in this common action tending to a common end. If, on the contrary, the orders and dispositions are contradictory with the theory-program-tactic of the Party, there will be no democratic or disciplinary mechanism that can prevent fractions, ruptures and degenerations.

The text continues: *"It comes down therefore to tracking the task of the leading organs. Who will have to do it? The whole party, the whole organization, must do it, not in the banal and parliamentary sense of its right to be consulted about the* ***"mandate"*** *to confer to the elected chiefs and about its limits,* ***but in the dialectical sense that embodies the tradition, the preparation, the real continuity in the thought and in the action of the movement.*** *Precisely because* ***we are anti-democratic, we think that in any matter a minority can have more corresponding views than those of the majority*** *in the interest of the revolutionary process."* (Communist Organization and Discipline, 1924).

"We thus summarize our thesis, and we believe to be thus faithful to the dialectics of Marxism: ***the action that the Party develops and the tactics that it adopts, that is, the manner in which the party acts towards the "outside" have at their turn consequences upon the organization and its "internal" constitution.*** *Fatally compromises the party that who, in the name of an unlimited discipline, pretends to have it disposed for an action, a tactic,* ***"whatever"*** *strategical maneuver, that is,* ***without well determined limits known by the ensemble of the militants.***

The desired maximal unity and disciplinary solidity will be effectively reached only by facing the problem in the basis of this platform, and ***not pretending that it is already solved prejudicially by a banal rule of mechanical obedience.*** *"* (Communist Organization and Discipline, 1924).

We commit ourselves to a militancy to carry out an action within *"well determined limits known by the ensemble of the militants",* as we have said before, *"in the dialectical sense that embodies the tradition, the preparation, the real continuity in the thought and in the action of the movement.".* Apart from this, no rule of mechanical obedience - whatever it may be - will ensure *"the maximum of discipline, that is, of unitary action of the whole organism"*. In fact, not only will it not ensure it, but it will liquidate the Party. It is for this reason that the collective study of the Party texts is fundamental, the international clarification on the basis of the past experiences in order to face correctly the experiences and struggles of the future.

In **"The Democratic Principle"** it is stated that *"The developments of these ideas are contained in the theses on tactics presented to the Congress of the Communist Party of Italy, and which the reader is familiar with"* and in **"Communist Organization and Discipline"** it is said that *"The problem is also partially considered in the tactic thesis for the 4th Congress which have recently been reproduced by Stato Operaio."* They are respectively the **"Theses on the tactics of the Communist Party of Italy - Rome (1922)"** and the **"Draft Theses of the CP of Italy for the IV World Congress - Moscow (1922)"**, from which we will depart in the next number.

(To be continued in the next number)

U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

On August 31, 2021, the last American soldier left Kabul airport on time, after almost 20 years of military occupation. It was the deadline of the truce granted by the Taliban for the US to completely withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. The militaristic US Democratic government was following in the footsteps of the previous Republican government, in yet another demonstration that, regardless of the intentions of individuals, it is the material reality that imposes itself.

What was the aim of the US occupation of Afghanistan in 2001?

"The fight against terrorism, fed by the gringos themselves, has the objective of hindering Asia, and especially China, from becoming the driving center of world finances, after having conquered industrial production. (...) The first Gulf War helped the US to solve the crisis of 1990, with the second Gulf War and with the war in Afghanistan, with the pretext of the attack on the twin towers, it solved the serious crisis that began in 2001, maintaining the occupation troops in Afghanistan and Pakistan, something it had not done in the first war. (...) From 1995 to the present year of 2015 to the historical capitalist countries must be added China and the total Asian surface that with its impetuous development definitively displaced the center of world capitalism from America to Asia, from the USA to China. (...) The old imperialisms and above all the USA can only make use of a third world war to try to remain on the throne. America alone cannot fight this war, taking into account the great difference in relation to the Chinese economy and the difficulty of finding allies". (El Comunista no. 56, November 2015).

"Moreover, the Anglo-Americans do not like the Chinese-Indian attempts to integrate the destabilizing Pakistan into their business area, since Pakistan is also re-arming the Afghans in their war against the Western occupation in such a strategic territory as Afghanistan. Strategic to lay the roads, the commercial routes (highways, railways, gas pipelines, oil pipelines, power lines...) between China-India-Pakistan with Iran-Arabia-Iraq-Syria-Turkey. Between the Russian Central Asian Republics with India-Pakistan and with the entire Middle East. (...) ***This has been the ultimate aim of the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq: to encircle and isolate China in order to try to channel, subdue or destroy the colossal development of the productive forces and of Chinese and Asian capitalism.*** *"* (El Comunista no. 46, May 2007).

With the occupation of Afghanistan, the US was attempting to block China's expansion in Asia and repeat the move with which it had been able to reverse its loss of weight in the international economy in the early 1990s, particularly at the expense of Japan, with the first Iraq war:

"Since 1993-1994 there has been no more talk of the bankruptcy of the US banks and savings banks. The war and post-war of Iraq allowed them to unload the weight and effects of the financial crisis on Japan, the European Union, Asia, Latin America and Africa. ***The Yankee army and the TERROR that it instills in its competitors are an economic agent, a tax collector, of the first magnitude****".* (El Comunista no. 46, May 2007).

The need to repeat the move was more than enough reason to organize the self-attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11th. However, **in this second attempt the situation was no longer the same as it had been ten years earlier, neither for the world nor for the US itself**. The impossibility of unloading the costs of the war on the other imperialisms, together with the failed attempt to take control of PDVSA through the "managers' lockout" of 2002-2003 and Saddam Hussein's decision to export his oil in euros, imposed the next step: the invasion of Iraq. With it, the US also sought to push up oil prices in order to become, through the costly *fracking* industry, the first net exporter of oil in the world a few years later.

The reality is that all these interventions have not succeeded in containing the development of the Asian productive forces, nor in unloading the costs of the war on the other imperialisms. In addition, with the policy of raising the price of oil, the US has resuscitated Russian imperialism (gas producer) from bankruptcy and has strengthened its competitors.

How have the power relations between the different imperialisms changed?

In the magazine "El Comunista" no. 43 (2004) we said: *"What will be the attitude, the strategy of the USA towards China-Asia? Will it follow the British strategy towards the USA during the 20th century of gradually ceding dominance? Or, on the contrary, will the military clash of the two powers be prepared and come in the near and medium future?"* (El Comunista no. 43, May 2004).

"The advance of China in the material facts of production is what determines the withdrawal of the United States, which, with each passing day, deepens its retreat from its former position of world primacy and is in a worse position to face an open war against China or against the world. At the same time, the losing contender has to try to survive by all means, even by means that end up hurting it, as it has been pushed to do with tariffs or could be forced to do with an unwinnable war. As we said in The Internationalist Proletarian no. 5: "It is not about its awareness of the facts, not even its subjective will, this would not be Marxism. It is about what acts the American bourgeoisie (or fractions of it) is forced to carry out, due to the effect of their material situation. And in the current situation of imperialism, ***the US can only choose among loser moves****."* (The Internationalist Proletarian no. 6, March 2021).

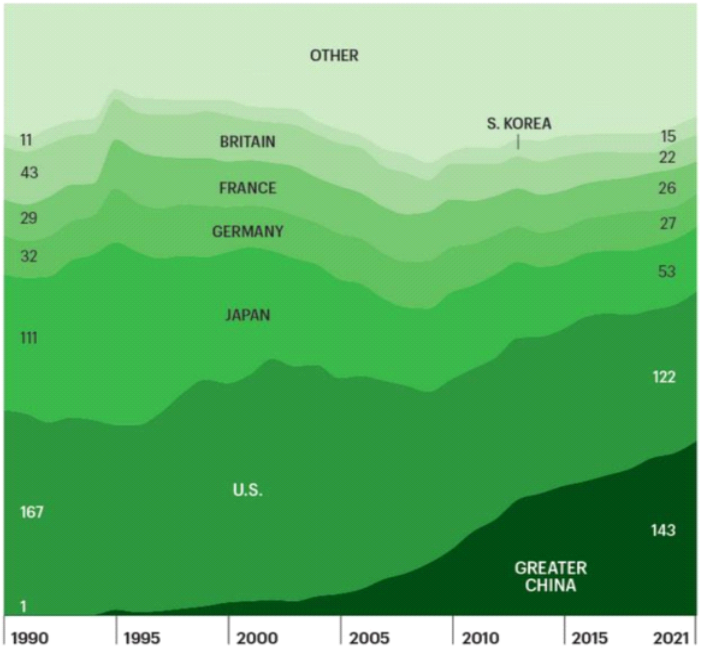
"What the American bourgeoisie cannot see is that the effects it sees with horror are not only or not so much the result of the policy of walled-in withdrawal. They are above all the result of the displacement of production towards Asia, of the tendential fall in the rate of profit in general and more markedly in the countries of older capitalism, of the material impossibility of continuing to impose their parasitic conditions on the rest of the bourgeoisies of the world. (…)

For this reason, another thing will be what the laws of the economy allow or impose American capitalism to do. This will be what determines whether it can effectively return to its previous

policy and partially recover the abandoned positions of influence, whether it will be forced to follow the current withdrawal dynamics or whether it can even reach a situation of collapse and internal implosion." (The Internationalist Proletarian no. 6, March 2021).

The development of Chinese capitalism in the field characteristic of the imperialist phase of capitalism, can be seen in its evolution within the 500 largest companies in the world by turnover collected by Fortune. China has displaced the US, shooting up its rise since 2008. Against China, the Western imperialisms have not been able to apply the same recipe that they applied to Japan from 1990 onwards.

BREAKDOWN OF *FORTUNE* GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES BY GEOGRAPHY



The same material development can be seen in the evolution of the first banks of the world. Dominated by Anglo-American imperialism in 1970, they were taken over by Japanese imperialism in 1990, but the positions were regained around 2010 by Anglo-American capital after having imposed on Japan the costs of the Gulf War, the quota system on its goods and having locked it into a crisis of overproduction within its borders. But in 2021, the first 4 banks are Chinese and their volumes of capital are each double those of their Anglo-American counterparts.

Top 10 world banks in 1970

Rank	Bank	Country	Assets in M $
1	Bank of America	US	25.573
2	First National City	US	23.092
3	Chase Manhattan	US	22.168
4	Barclays Bank	UK	15.137
5	Manufacturers Hanover	US	11.965
6	JPMorgan	US	11.448
7	National Westminster Bank	UK	10.642
8	Western Bancorp	US	10.617
9	Banca Nazionale del Lavoro	Italy	10.233
10	Chemical New York	US	9.739

Top 10 world banks in 1990

Rank	Bank	Country	Tier 1 in M $
1	Sumitomo Bank	Japan	13.357
2	Dai-Ichi Kangyo Bank	Japan	12.322
3	Fuji Bank	Japan	11.855
4	Crédit Agricole	France	11.802
5	Sanwa Bank	Japan	11.186
6	Mitsubishi Bank	Japan	10.900
7	Barclays Bank	UK	10.715
8	National Westminster Bank	UK	9.761
9	Deutsche Bank	Germany	8.462
10	Industrial Bank of Japan	Japan	8.184

Top 10 global banks in 2010

Rank	Bank	Country	Tier 1 in M $
1	Bank of America	US	160.000
2	JPMorgan Chase	US	133.000
3	Citigroup	US	127.000
4	Royal Bank of Scotland	UK	123.000
5	HSBC	UK	122.000
6	Wells Fargo	US	94.000
7	ICBC	China	91.000
8	BNP Paribas	France	91.000
9	Santander	Spain	82.000
10	Barclays	UK	80.000

Top 20 global banks in 2021

Rank	Previous rank	Bank	Country	Tier 1 in billion $
1	1	ICBC	China	440
2	2	China Construction Bank	China	362
3	3	Agricultural Bank of China	China	336
4	4	Bank of China	China	305
5	5	JPMorgan Chase	US	235
6	6	Bank of America	US	200
7	8	Citigroup	US	167
8	9	HSBC Holdings	UK	160
9	7	Wells Fargo	US	158
10	10	Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group	Japan	144
11	11	Bank of Communications	China	132
12	12	Crédit Agricole	France	127
13	13	BNP Paribas	France	122
14	17	China Merchants Bank	China	106
15	22	Postal Savings Bank of China	China	103
16	14	Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group	Japan	101
17	15	Santander Bank	Spain	97
18	20	Shanghai Pudong Development Bank	China	96
19	21	Industrial Bank	China	94
20	16	Goldman Sachs	US	93

China has reached the first place in world trade, surpassing its competitors in total and net exports:

Exports in millions of dollars

Country	2001	2008	2019	2020
China	266.098	1.430.693	2.498.569	2.590.600
USA	729.080	1.299.898	1.644.276	1.430.253
Germany	571.426	1.457.462	1.493.266	1.383.968

Source: UN Comtrade Database

Imports in millions of dollars				
Country	2001	2008	2019	2020
China	243.552	1.132.562	2.068.950	2.055.590
USA	1.140.900	2.164.834	2.567.492	2.405.381
Germany	486.022	1.192.581	1.239.897	1.171.915
Source: UN Comtrade Database				

The primacy of Chinese imperialism in the production of steel, cement, aluminum, etc. can also be seen in the study published in The Internationalist Proletarian no. 6.

Conclusion: *" The development of productive forces in Asia has won the day over the U.S. in its attempts to encircle and isolate China through its military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq."* (The Internationalist Proletarian no. 7, July 2021).

Consequences of the US defeat in Afghanistan

It is obvious that the final objective that the US pursued with the invasion of Afghanistan (and Iraq) has not been achieved. Neither that of unloading the crisis on its competitors nor that of preventing the interconnection between the different parts of Asia. But with its military presence on the ground and the financing of all kinds of terrorist groups, it has managed to slow down China's penetration into Afghanistan and keep it on hold: *"For the time being the China Metallurgical Group Corporation formally holds the concession to exploit the large copper mine in Mes Aynak, a few dozen kilometers south of Kabul. But the enormous cost and insecurity have put the investment on hold".* (La Vanguardia, 22-08-2021). But now the US has had to abandon with its tail between its legs the position from which it was carrying out its systematic sabotage in the area. **It is undoubtedly a full-fledged DEFEAT**, a defeat that, on the other hand, the development of the productive forces in Asia made inevitable.

Contrary to what the bourgeois press has published, it is important to see that Kabul is not Saigon, that Afghanistan is not Vietnam, that the Taliban are not the Viet Cong (which, by the way, did not give any truce to the US in its disbandment), and, above all, that the Afghan bourgeoisie is not the Vietnamese revolutionary bourgeoisie that militarily defeated the French army first, the American and South Vietnamese army later, and the Chinese and Cambodian army later, while the defeats of the British, Russians and now Americans in Afghanistan never had this bourgeois revolutionary content.

The defeat of the US in 1975 at the hands of the Vietnamese bourgeoisie meant the opening of the development of capitalism in Asia that the US has tried unsuccessfully to stop ever since. The defeat of the US in 2021 at the hands of the Afghan bourgeoisie, supported by Pakistan and China, is the demonstration of the closing of a cycle, that the development of the productive forces in Asia has already surpassed the possibilities of US resistance.

Another immediate consequence of the current defeat is a loss of US credibility in its role as bully of the world. A mastermind of the US bourgeoisie (M.R. Bloomberg) publishes an editorial in his newspaper that shows a certain desperation: *"After this tragedy, will the word of the US be credible again?* Or, in other words: *"The rest of the imperialisms will have to think long and hard before joining in a serious alliance with the most likely losing horse."* (The Internationalist Proletarian no. 7, July 2021).

Does this mean that the US has disappeared as imperialism and stopped trying to play this role? Not at all. However, every day that goes by it is finding it more difficult to emerge victorious from a world inter-imperialist conflict, more difficult to get allies for it and more and more failed attempts to unleash it are accumulating. Obviously, this does not mean that it will not continue to try it, both in Central (and East) Asia and in the rest of the world. In view of this material difficulty, **the historical alternative facing the US, if it does not manage to trigger a third imperialist slaughter, is its internal implosion (similar to the one suffered by Russia in the 1990s), with or without civil war or internal dismemberment.**

"If Anglo-American imperialism finally fails in its attempts to provoke the war between India and China, the old bloc must reduce its power until it crumbles in a more or less long process, depending on the outbreak of the international financial and industrial crack, its intensity and the degree of generalization all over the globe. Either this progressive line of loss of decision-making power by the Anglo-Americans or they are obliged by economic determinism to wage war in defense of the American Model of Life, since when the great crisis of relative overproduction, of productive overcapacity, breaks out, the Western European Model of Life and even the Japanese Model of Life must also explode. [and today we would also say the Chinese one]. "(El Comunista no. 47, May 2008).

This perspective is the culmination of a process we have been describing for years. Does this mean that if the US does not succeed in unleashing the war, capitalism will finally find peace? Wars are inevitable in capitalism as a consequence of the commercial war and its real content: the destruction of the accumulated productive overcapacity (see in this issue the article *"The crisis of overproduction leads to imperialist war"*). In the face of this, the only historical alternative is the INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST REVOLUTION!

The cost of military intervention

The basis of war is the productive economy: it is not military genius but productive muscle that determines the victor and the vanquished.

"The war in Afghanistan, at the beginning, did not require significant spending. It is in the last two years that the dead and the expenses have begun to multiply. Especially with the arrival of the pacifist warrior Barack Obama as US president, since he has extended the Afghan war to entire regions of Pakistan, with the aim of preventing or delaying the construction of gas and oil pipelines from Iran-Iraq-Emirates-Arabia to India-China-Korea, etc., passing through Afghanistan-Pakistan. The pipelines, gas pipelines, highways, railways, airports, lead to the establishment of networks, of a spider's web of economic, political and military interests and interdependencies between the great and medium powers of Central and East Asia and the Middle East, definitively breaking the West's control over the geostrategic area of Asia Minor for its oil and gas. (...) As the expense of the wars of occupation of Iraq (since 2003), of Afghanistan and of part of Pakistan is running almost all of it at the expense of the USA, this gigantic expense in the wars that bog down the occupant,

diverts immense amounts of money from the production, finances, infrastructures and services of the USA towards that endless bonfire of war". (El Comunista no. 50, September 2010).

The cost of the war in Afghanistan has reached $2.2 trillion, with a huge number of lives burned:

"In this period, 800,000 US soldiers will have served in this war front, of whom, so far, 2,443 have died (...) There are another 20,666 wounded. And around 3,800 civilians hired by the Pentagon have died. (...) In these calculations we must include another 1,144 military personnel who died in the ranks of the allies - 51 countries participated in the war -, in addition to 113,000 Afghans, including military, police and civilians. To these must be added the deaths of 51,191 Islamic militiamen. The economic cost amounts to 2.2 billion dollars (...) This figure includes operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan and reconstruction costs, as well as the training of an army of 300,000 members, which has evaporated. The Sigar indicates that the exclusive expenditure on military actions rises to 837,000 million dollars". (La Vanguardia, 23-08-2021). To these dead must be added the numerous soldiers who die prematurely on their return due to suicide or as a consequence of the after-effects of their presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.

These costs have in turn represented a series of fabulous profits for the companies of the military sector, but they are too heavy a burden for an economy that is retreating: *"This partial withdrawal of soldiers from Afghanistan, Iraq and Germany highlights not so much or not only Trump's line of withdrawal but also the* ***inability of the US to keep its army deployed, receiving blows all over the place."*** (The Internationalist Proletarian no. 6, March 2021).

Crumbling of the Afghan puppet state

To the perplexity of the US, the Taliban were able to regain control over practically the whole of Afghanistan in a matter of days.

The US plan was to withdraw leaving an army of 300,000 armed troops so that Afghanistan would bleed into an internal civil war that would prolong the blockade that they themselves could no longer maintain *in situ*, intervening indirectly to help maintain the chaos, as they did successfully in the Iraq-Iran war between 1980 and 1988. The US had the illusion of being able to withdraw from Afghanistan by keeping one foot inside through the Ghani government's army and its network of contacts, but practically the whole of this army has refused to serve for the umpteenth time as cannon fodder for the greater glory of American imperialism (unlike what Najibullah's government did when the Russians withdrew in 1989). Faced with the blitzkrieg offensive launched by the Taliban and initiated precisely in the territories of the former Northern Alliance (which the first Taliban government did not manage to control), several of the former warlords previously opposed to the Taliban made direct pacts with them (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar or Ismail Khan in Herat), others fled without fighting (Abdul Rashid Dostum in Mazar-i-Sharif) and only the son of Ahmad Shah Massud together with the second of Ashraf Ghani, Amrulah Saleh, have tried to organize a small armed opposition in the Panjshir valley, waiting for an international collaboration that has not arrived, collapsing quickly.

Events were precipitated at the beginning of August: *"At first, Taliban attacks last month (...) were repelled by Afghan special forces commandos. But on August 6, the Taliban took Zaranj, the dusty capital of the southwestern province of Nimroz, with little resistance. (...) Within two days, the Taliban controlled five of 34 provincial capitals, four of them in the north, historically a bastion of warlord resistance to Taliban rule. (...) The talks between Ghani and Dostum fell on deaf ears because of the surrender that same day of hundreds of Afghan soldiers in nearby Kunduz. By the time Ghani flew back to Kabul, the Taliban controlled nine of the country's 34 provincial capitals. (...) veteran warlord Mohammad Ismail Khan had resumed the fight against the old enemy. (...) But by Friday, the 70-year-old warlord had already laid down his arms and was posing for photos on a luxurious sofa with members of the same Islamist organization he fought as part of the northern alliance in the 1990s. (...) After negotiations in Qatar that same day* [he refers to the following Sunday]*, an agreement was reached according to which the Taliban would not hinder the US evacuation at the airport, but would have access to the presidential palace. By 7 p.m., Afghans learned that Ghani had fled. Islamist militants stormed Kabul and seized abandoned police posts. (...) On Monday, Kabul woke up with the Taliban occupation".* (Expansión, 20-08-2021).

The failure of the US plan goes so far that all its investment in stopping the Taliban has ended up in the hands of the Taliban themselves: *"Estimates by Reuters indicate that the federal administration spent $28 billion on weapons alone from 2002 to 2017. The Pentagon estimates that the Taliban may have 2,000 armored vehicles and 40 aircraft still in operation. (...) Between 2003 and 2016, Afghanistan's official troops received 358,530 rifles, 64,000 machine guns, 25,327 grenades or 22,174 Humvees*." (La Vanguardia, 05-09-2021). A WHOLE ARSENAL FOR FREE ON ACCOUNT OF UNCLE SAM!

So lamented one of the US puppets, once on the run, in bewilderment: *"There were rumors that the instructions not to fight came from the top," explained Ajmal Ahmady, the Harvard-educated governor of the Afghan central bank, in a tweet on Monday after he went into exile. "It seems hard to believe, but it remains inexplicable that the Afghan National Security Forces abandoned their posts so quickly. It is beyond comprehension."* (Expansión, 20-08-2021).

Material basis for the speed of the Taliban advance

What happened in late July that caused the Taliban's seizure of power to fully accelerate? What turned initial resistance into an unresisted advance? What made warlords like Ismail Khan go from preparing for war to posing on a couch with the Taliban? Why did others flee?

On July 28th 2021, Taliban representative Abdul Ghani Baradar met (along with a delegation that included the religious council representative and publicity representative) with Wang Yi, the Chinese foreign minister. At this meeting, the Chinese minister noted that *" the Afghan Taliban is an important military and political force in Afghanistan and is expected to play an important role in the country's peace, reconciliation and reconstruction process. "* (PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28-07-2021). **This statement signifies public and explicit support for the Taliban to take control of the country.** In return, the Taliban *"stands ready to work with other parties*

to establish a political framework in Afghanistan that is broadly-based, inclusive and accepted by the entire Afghan people and to protect human rights, especially the rights of women and children. The Afghan Taliban will never allow any force to use the Afghan territory to engage in acts detrimental to China [referring to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)]*. (...) The Afghan Taliban will also make its own efforts toward fostering an enabling investment environment.*" Translated, the Taliban pledge to create a safe environment for Chinese investments in a capitalist environment and not to serve as a platform for US-funded groups to attack China, to forget the claim of Pashtunistan, all this, while maintaining a part of the more folkloric superstructure ensuring its intercompatibility with capitalist management.

What is the potential volume of this business?

"Anyway, Taliban spokesman Sohail Shahin has made an advance. And he did so on Chinese television. (...) "The world can come and explore our mines; this invitation is for all countries, and we are grateful to any country that helps us in these critical moments". It was quite an invitation to China, unnecessary at this point. ***Afghanistan's soil has everything from precious stones to so-called rare earths for high-tech. And enormous reserves of lithium*** *(...)"* (La Vanguardia, 21-08-2021). *"Afghanistan is sitting on deposits* [of minerals and rare earths] ***estimated to be worth $1 trillion or more****, including what may be the world's largest lithium reserves (...)"* (Bloomberg, 24-08-2021).

With this business perspective, the Taliban have made some of their enemies capitulate, turning them into their future partners. We are the representatives in Afghanistan of this business with China: do you prefer that we continue killing each other or do we all rather exploit this business that can be juicier than opium and other current sources of financing?

In addition to that, *"US troops crept out of Bagram airfield in the middle of the night on 1 July. As they left, they cut the electricity to the fortified military base they had been using for two decades (...) By the time the Afghan troops discovered that the Americans had left hours earlier, Bagram had already been sacked".* (Expansión 20-08-2021). The feeling of the Afghan army of having been abandoned to their fate, like cattle at the slaughterhouse, could not be greater. This US-armed army has not only not fought, but an important part of it has been integrated with the Taliban: the Taliban soldiers who occupied the runway of the Kabul airport two months later did not wear turbans and long beards, but were dressed in regular military uniform.

The Taliban are committed to being a faithful reflection of the needs of capitalism in Afghanistan. In fact, they can play this role because they were already demonstrating in practice that their management corresponded better to the modern demands of capital than the inoperative management of the US puppet government.

Just as in the invasion of Iraq, the US bourgeoisie confuses its desires with material reality. In that invasion, the US bourgeoisie was unable to see that it was not enough to eliminate the individual Saddam Hussein because this individual was nothing more than the expression of the interests of a bourgeoisie that was prepared to fight to the end for every inch of land that the US army wanted to conquer. In the present disbandment, the US has also failed to see that in Afghanistan it would be useless to put one or fifteen of its puppets at the head of the government because there is a bourgeois and petty bourgeois social body to which the material economic reality imposes another path.

An example of this bourgeois social body: *"The Taliban are not professional people, but when we call them they come and with the previous government everything was trouble," says satisfied businessman Qari Gul Mohammed, who earns about a million dollars a year. He does not hesitate to say that, with them in power, he feels more secure. In addition to owning four companies that export nuts outside Afghanistan, this influential 50-year-old businessman has been one of the negotiators between the Taliban and the deposed authorities. He was part of a group of 12 notables, six from the economic sector and six from the religious sector, who moved behind the scenes from one side to the other".* (El País, 26-09-2021).

From the study of Taliban finances in Nimroz province, it appears that *"only 9 per cent ($5.1 million) of Taliban finances came from drugs last year, while 80 per cent ($40.9 million) came from taxes on the transit of legal goods (...) The road had more than 25 government checkpoints and many charged a fee. In contrast, the Taliban who patrol the roads have far fewer checkpoints and give a receipt, so that only a single payment is necessary. (...) In the last few years, the Taliban have widened their tax base from the oshr tax, a tithe of the harvest crops, and the zakat, a religious tax of 2.5% of the disposable income that is destined to the poorest."* (Expansión, 18-08-2021).

The US puppet government charged several times the bribe or transit tax for the same merchandise, making goods transiting from Pakistan or India to Iran and vice versa more expensive, in line with the US function of blocking the development of the productive forces. On the other hand, the Taliban guarantee only one payment, demonstrating that they represent a more modern capitalist management. Moreover, they guarantee some assistance to the poorest part of the population as any capitalist state does, obtaining a certain sympathy from this sector of the population.

Finally, the systematic murder of civilians by the US explains the sympathy of sectors of the population with those who fight them.

These material factors explain the rapid Taliban advance and why, despite the fact that *"the Afghan National Army has been in the hands of Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras"* (La Vanguardia, 28-08-2021), this army has surrendered and dissolved like a sugar cube in water in the face of the mainly Pashtun Taliban.

US blockade attempts

The US has reacted by freezing accounts and the IMF's contribution to Afghanistan: *"The International Monetary Fund said that the new government in Afghanistan is cut off from using fund reserve assets days before the nation was set to receive almost $500 million. (...) The U.S. has frozen nearly $9.5 billion in assets belonging to the Afghan central bank and stopped shipments of cash to the nation (…)"* (Bloomberg, 18-08-2021).

With this action, the US does not succeed in slowing down its loss of control, but rather accelerates it, driving the Afghan

bourgeoisie completely into the arms of China and other powers. Despite this attempt at a blockade, in order not to be completely out of the game, the US has declared that it will make small contributions for humanitarian aid.

On 20-10-2021 representatives of China, Russia, Pakistan, India and Iran, as well as the other Central Asian states, met with the Taliban government in Moscow. The line set to the Taliban is: "moderate policies", "inclusive government", "not allowing terrorist organizations", etc. in exchange for funding ("economic assistance") and to promote a donor conference under the auspices of the UN.

In order to sabotage this unification of the Afghan bourgeoisie, the Islamic State of Khorasan has already carried out at least two attacks against the Hazara (Shiite) population, another at the funeral of the mother of the Taliban spokesman and has claimed responsibility for several attacks against Taliban patrols. The main objective of the countries convening the conference is that the groups financed by the USA (the Islamic State of Khorasan) are neutralized and Afghanistan is opened to their investments and the traffic of their goods. This easily explains why the US declined to participate in the conference, despite having been invited.

Chaos at Kabul airport

The last throes of the US presence were highly illustrative. While on the Taliban side they boasted of their control of the situation, at the airport managed by US soldiers there was patent chaos, people were crowding together, to the point that those who had managed to sneak in were thrown out of the planes that were taking off.

The US tried in vain to keep the crowds at bay, appealing for people not to go to the airport, but they were unable to contain the situation. The remedy was the now typical of Anglo-Saxon imperialism: *"Last Wednesday, the US Embassy in Afghanistan issued an advisory warning Americans to stay away from the airport because of "security threats" outside the gates. This warning was also issued by the Embassies of the United Kingdom and Australia. "* (Expansión 27-08-2021). They even pointed out the group they were going to use: the Islamic State of Khorasan. And so it was, on Friday August 27th 2021 two bombs exploded at Kabul airport.

The Taliban dissociated themselves from the attacks and took the opportunity to show that the US army was incapable of preventing them: *"The Islamic Emirate strongly condemns the attack on civilians at the Kabul airport, which took place in an area where US forces are responsible for security. "* (Expansión 27-08-2021).

This attack resolved another issue, it justified the decision to maintain the exit: *"The G7 failed last Monday to convince US President Joe Biden of the need to extend the evacuation beyond 31 August".*

The US had good reason. The Taliban had stopped killing American soldiers and attacking their positions because the US had promised to leave by a deadline, but: *"Suhail Shaheen warned yesterday in declarations to the British channel Sky News that extending beyond the end of August the efforts of the allied countries to evacuate people from Afghanistan was a "red line" and would provoke "a reaction" ".* (Expansión 24-08-2021).

The US wanted to make one last demonstration to the world that it had the situation under control. The US farewell was the murder of 10 civilians in Kabul on 29-08-2021 under the pretext of trying to prevent a second attack: *"A drone attack aimed at neutralizing an alleged car bomb killed ten civilians in Kabul on Sunday, half of them children".* (El País, 31-08-2021). They pretend to make believe that they know in advance even the group that is going to carry out the attacks, but every time they "respond" they do nothing but kill civilians. There is a very simple explanation for this, they themselves organize the attacks.

The only actors are not China and the US

The US admission of its inability to maintain the occupation not only benefits the Afghan and Chinese bourgeoisie.

Pakistan, cradle and protector of the Afghan Taliban, is one of the clear beneficiaries of the new status quo: *"The Afghans have broken the shackles of slavery", declared the prime minister Pakistan Imran Khan".* (La Vanguardia, 22-08-2021). Although tendentious, this statement is significant: *"Seven years ago, a former chief of the Pakistani secret services, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Hamid Gul, launched a provocative sentence (...): "When history is written, it will be said that the ISI defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan with the help of America. And then that the ISI, with the help of America, defeated America".* (La Vanguardia, 22-08-2021).

Iran also welcomes the American flight, after the harassment to which it has subjected the American army in Iraq (where the American military presence is already residual and the end of the military presence is scheduled for this very 2021): *"Iran, the great Shiite power, has not recognized the Taliban (Sunni extremists). However, statements by its senior officials give clear signals of the Islamic Republic's approval of the newly restored Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The Iranian president (...) has welcomed "the shameful defeat of the US" in that country and declared that the new situation "must become a new opportunity to regain life, security and peace". (...) the Iranian Embassy is one of the few that is still active in Kabul".* (El País 28-08-2021). Iranian imperialism will also try to play its cards inside Afghanistan: *"Iran has criticized the exclusion of the Hazaras (Shiites) (...), 30 of the 33 posts are occupied by Pashtuns. "*(La Vanguardia, 10-09-2021).

On the other hand, at the same time that Pakistani influence is increasing, Indian influence is decreasing, which is one of the countries that has seen the change of government in Afghanistan with concern, especially in relation to the continuity of the projects that Indian imperialism was planning to develop in Afghanistan: *"They are going to begin with an economic plan to make the country self-sustainable, exploiting mines and recovering the TAPI gas pipeline project, which would take gas from the deposits of Turkmenistan to India through Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is a pipeline that interests the Indians and annoys the Chinese, and it is undoubtedly a matter that the Taliban chief Abdul Ghani Baradar dealt with during his visit to China after passing through Turkmenistan".* (La Vanguardia, 24-01-2021). It is no secret that from India, currently governed by Hindu nationalists, actions to sabotage China's expansion in Pakistan are being organized, as it is not improbable that this will be done in Afghanistan: *"Pakistan is once again on the winning side, but*

it is swallowing saliva. It has fenced off 90% of its border, with 575 turrets. Its foreign minister yesterday accused 'Afghan [pre-Taliban] *and Indian intelligence' of the 'suicide attack' last month on a bus - near a Pakistani dam - in which nine Chinese engineers were killed".* (La Vanguardia, 13-08-2021). *"In 2020 alone they carried out 120 attacks and last July there were 26."* (El País, 06-09-2021). Through these groups, whether they are Baloch independence fighters or the Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (the Pakistani branch of the Taliban, opposed to the government of Pakistan), the American and Indian imperialisms will try to sabotage the China-Pakistan interconnection.

In this sense, China is perfectly aware that the ETIM has used Afghanistan as a base for its previous US-sponsored attacks on China (historically there were even Uighurs among the Taliban). Anyway, with its departure, the US has lost much of its leverage while right now it is China that has something to offer to the Taliban and the Afghan bourgeoisie in general. On the other hand, China has the situation under control both in Xinjiang and in the rest of the country, in a much more overwhelming way than twenty years ago.

As for Russia, for the time being it is aligned with China in its interests regarding Afghanistan. However, it is also somewhat concerned about the spread of Islamist terrorism (that is, the destabilization and provocation promoted by the US in the area), which has led it to increase its military presence on Afghanistan's borders, as has China itself, whose military presence outside its borders is gradually making headway: *"Chinese and Tajik troops began anti-terrorist maneuvers three days ago on the outskirts of Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan, and pledged to work together to ensure regional security."* (La Vanguardia, 20-08-2021). *"One of the Kremlin's fears is that the arrival of refugees, in Russia or in its backyard, will be used by extremist elements. "We don't want fighters to come camouflaged as refugees", Vladimir Putin has recently said (...)".* (La Vanguardia, 27-08-2021).

"In the talk with Putin on Wednesday, Xi reiterated China's position of non-interference and respecting Afghanistan's sovereignty and independence. For his part, the Russian leader told Xi that he shares China's positions and interests and is willing to work with Beijing to "prevent foreign forces from interfering and destroying" in Afghanistan. Xi urged all parties in Afghanistan to build an open and inclusive political framework, implement moderate and stable policies, and cut ties with all terrorist groups. (...) With an eye on the country's vast mineral wealth and on preventing terrorism from spreading across the border, the Chinese and Russian authorities have so far been benevolent towards the Taliban". (La Vanguardia, 26-08-2021).

As for Qatar, which has hosted the Taliban leadership in recent years and has been the venue for meetings between them and the Americans, it also has an imperialist interest in the area, for the moment in tune with Iran and evidently with its ally Turkey. It was precisely the Qatari airlines that were the first to resume commercial flights from Kabul airport, abandoned by the Americans. *"Qatar has participated, together with Turkey, in the repair and operation of the airfield that was left unusable after the departure of the US troops."* (El País 10-09-2021). *"Qatar and Turkey have offered to manage the airport, but the Taliban do not seem willing to leave security in the hands of a private company, as Ankara proposes."* (La Vanguardia, 10-09-2021).

As for the EU, the situation created in Afghanistan after the American exit has several consequences. On the one hand, it reaffirms in a whole sector of the European bourgeoisie the imperialist need to improve their joint military capacity. On the other hand, neither do they want to let the business opportunities that China is also pursuing in the area go to waste, and they are already preparing the possible landing of their investments through so-called "humanitarian aid": *""The Russians and the Chinese are already there, and we need a commitment if we really want to help on the ground," declared a high diplomat of the European Union (...)."* (Expansión, 09-09-2021). A few days later, *"The European Union pledged $1 billion euros, or $1.15 billion, in aid to Afghanistan and to neighboring countries."* (New York Times, 12-10-2021).

Finally, another issue that worries Europe (as well as Iran or Turkey, or even Russia) is the possible flood of refugees or migrants if the situation does not stabilize in the coming months. Pakistan and Iran currently host most of the Afghan refugees abroad (the majority being the several million internally displaced persons), but there is some risk that the situation could be used in a similar way to the millions of Syrian refugees thrown into Europe in 2015. To prepare for this possibility, all the "humanist" bourgeoisies involved are already building walls and militarizing their borders. See also, in this issue of the magazine, the article *"Immigration as a Weapon of War"*.

The tasks of the Afghan proletariat

To avoid getting lost in the marketing campaigns of one or the other, we must return to the fundamental statements, too often buried under the general noise of the dominant ideology. Let us solidly support ourselves on two basic pillars of the materialist conception of history:

" The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of human beings that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness." (Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, K. Marx, 1859).

"(…) In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production ". (Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, K. Marx, 1859).

If anyone needs a simplification of these precise and profound theorems, for the case at hand: we will not explain the historical character and meaning of the Taliban movement by their declamations, turbans and beards, but we will explain the

real meaning of these declamations, turbans and beards by the analysis of the material basis, of the relations of production, of which they are the reflection and superstructure in a given period.

An illustrative comparison: the US and Europe put Khomeini's group in power in Iran, relying on the petty bourgeoisie of the bazaar, to derail the capitalist industrial modernization that the Shah of Persia was trying to introduce. This did not prevent the Islamic Republic from taking over from the Shah as an expression of the drive of the productive forces and has served for the development and shaping of the current capitalist power that Iran is. The Islamic superstructure has not bothered more than the Christian superstructure (Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant) to which the Western bourgeoisie hastened to return, after having taken only two and a half steps in its class domination.

The first Taliban government was not a return to feudalism, but it was an adequate expression of the need of US imperialism to block the productive forces in the region and the penetration of Russian imperialism in the region. The US had relied on the population in the rural areas, but this was not going to block productive forces that could not be blocked, to the extent that the Taliban no longer served the US.

The new Taliban government is the expression of the development of these productive forces that the US military occupation could not prevent. It is the appropriate expression at this moment of the development of the Afghan bourgeoisie, as the testimony of the bourgeois of Kandahar, the management of the roads and the collection of taxes, has confirmed above.

Afghanistan is a country fully integrated in the world market, a place of transit of goods and connection between the big countries of the area. Opium, amphetamines and mining products are exported all over the world and will be exported even more if the Chinese investment forecasts and those of the other imperialisms come true.

Moreover, the population in Afghanistan is migrating more and more to the cities, a completely capitalist tendency. Kabul now has almost 5 million people, and all Afghan cities have only grown in population, like the whole country, during the years of occupation.

The current Taliban are the expression of this material reality and it is what allows them to present themselves to the world as adequate managers of Afghan capitalism: *"The Taliban promised yesterday a "general amnesty" after the capture of Kabul and a state in which women will be able to work in the "framework of Islam". (...) "We don't want anyone to leave the country, this is their country, this is our common homeland, we have common values, common religion, common nation (...)". "* (Expansión, 22-08-2021).

The characters of the Taliban movement are used by the western propaganda, as backward as they are, to demand respect for women's rights and human rights and to present itself as their guarantor. In capitalism there are no human beings, abstract men and women, there are exploiters and there are exploited. The living conditions of Afghan proletarian women have nothing to do with the living conditions of Afghan bourgeois women either. The Taliban are retrograde and reactionary, yes, just as reactionary as any political-military group supported by this or that imperialist group, just as those same imperialist groups, but **it is a reactionary nature in relation to the proletarian revolution, not a feudal return**.

In Afghanistan there is no struggle against feudalism to wage. In Afghanistan what is on the agenda is the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the overthrow of its managers (technocrats, Taliban, whoever), a struggle that the Afghan proletariat (in Afghanistan and in emigration) can only carry forward together with the rest of the world proletariat, organizing as a *class for itself* in the International Communist Party.

The Afghan and international proletariat will make its way, through the deserts that it will be necessary to cross, rejecting the drug of nationalism and religion (in this case, more than ever, the opium of the people) and any division on the basis of language or ethnicity, recovering Marxism as the weapon that will allow the working class, through the international communist revolution, to return to the international bourgeoisie all the workers' bloodshed and to put a definitive end to the crises, the wars and the atrocities of capitalism.

OUT WITH THE IMPERIALIST ARMIES OF ALL COUNTRIES!
AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST REVOLUTION!

IMMIGRATION AS A WEAPON OF WAR

In the internecine struggle waged between the various imperialist powers, anything goes. The proletariat, the reserveless, we are nothing but cannon fodder used for their interests. In this struggle, all the bourgeois states are equally criminal and murderous.

In September 2021, nearly 14,500 people crowded under a bridge at the US border on the Rio Grande. They were chased on horseback by US police to keep them out of the country. Most of them were Haitians, but they did not come from Haiti, but were living elsewhere in Latin America. They slept among debris and feces; on the crossing several were killed, in addition to having been raped. The US quickly sent them directly back to Haiti, filling several planes a day, regardless of whether they no longer lived there, returning them to a place where they had no roots left. In 2018, the various migrant caravans that departed mainly from Honduras and Mexico to the US came to agglutinate some 10,000 people. These caravans are managed by Mexico; mostly through Tapachula, the Mexican town bordering Guatemala. There they imprison, beat up, torture the immigrants and send them back across the border or let them leave for the U.S., not without extortion, depending on the interests of the Mexican bourgeois state: when they want to claim more money from the U.S., they let them continue to generate a problem at the U.S. border, when they receive the money, they do not let anyone pass. **These caravans are not organized spontaneously; in order to mobilize such large groups of people at the same time, it is necessary to have the means and a coordinated network.** The Spanish bourgeois newspaper El País reported last September that in the current caravan a Haitian commander was mobilizing the majority: *"Commander Lempira can no longer look back. He was one of the visible faces (...) of the caravans in recent days. He mobilized hundreds of Haitians and Central Americans desperate to flee Tapachula through WhatsApp groups and public calls in the central park".* (El País, 13-09-2021). In 2018 the Catholic Church provided the means (lodging and food) so that the immigrants could move towards the USA. Last August alone, 209,000 immigrants were detained in the U.S. and this figure is lower than in July. (El País, 20-09-2021).

9,000 people, in the month of May and in a single day, were thrown by the Moroccan bourgeois state to cross the border between Morocco and the Spanish capitalist state, arriving at Ceuta. The criminal Spanish state sent the army which, together with the police, the same day were returning them to Morocco, chasing them through the water and along the beach. The following days the repressive forces of the bourgeois state went hunting, as if they were animals, those they did not manage to drive out; the immigrants even hid in the sewers so as not to be sent back. The minors who stayed in Ceuta were and still are crammed in barracks, in filthy conditions. The bourgeoisie had the shamelessness to publish in May (El País, 13-05-2021) that they would stop undressing and exploring the genitals of minors to determine their age (which means that they have been doing it for years) and that they would stop tying to their beds those who had "behavior disorders", that is, those who rebelled against their imprisonment in the minors' centers and the infamous conditions in which they keep them.

In 2020, about 23,000 immigrants arrived on the island of Gran Canaria in the Spanish state by small boats (the majority, about 15,000, arrived from August to November). There were days when more than 2,000 immigrants arrived in total in small boats on the route from the Moroccan ports of Al-Aaiun and Dakhla. In the centers where they are locked up there are no basic services, they are unhealthy and the food they are given is scarce and bad, which is why they have been rioting in centers on one island or another with the consequent brutal repression by the Spanish police who, after each riot, take several immigrants prisoner. On the island of El Hierro, where the small boats arrive, the Red Cross was in charge of locking them in a barrack in an inaccessible place on the island and guarding it so that no one could approach and see the conditions in which they were being held. The criminal Moroccan state uses them as a weapon to put pressure on the Spanish state and the European Union in its position towards the Sahara and to give it more money to contain them. The criminal Spanish state persecutes them and imprisons them until it expels them without a second thought.

The route by sea from Algeria to the Spanish state is being reactivated since 2019. Nine corpses were found on the beaches of Almeria in September, including a child. In 2020, more than 11,000 immigrants arrived by that route. The Algerian bourgeois state also pressures both the European Union and the Spanish state to receive more money and in its relationship with Morocco; rival power in North Africa.

It is clear that all these states allow and give carte blanche to the so-called mafias to take the boats out to sea or move the immigrants through the deserts. The real mafia is each and every bourgeois capitalist state.

In March last year, the Turkish capitalist state threw over 130,000 people over the border into Greece. In this case the thuggish Turkey openly declared it was opening the borders so that the EU would make good on promised payments to contain the refugees; the Greek army directly shot and gassed them, killing several migrants. When the migrants enter Greece by sea, the Greek police send them back to Turkish waters in inflatable rafts that the police themselves puncture so that they sink, when they enter through the Evros river the Turkish and Greek police play a macabre ping pong with the migrants who are sent back and forth several times.

In 2015 more than one million refugees arrived in Europe and the result was the pact with Turkey to be paid 6 billion euros in exchange for its services as a paid jailer and thug. Turkey has not yet received all this money and every time it throws human flesh at the EU borders, the EU releases a little more. In Turkey it is known that refugees are used to work in textile workshops from sunrise to sunset living in crowded refugee camps. In the "humanist" Europe they put them and continue to put them in refugee camps that quadruple the capacity for which they were built, like the one in Moria in Greece, which burned down in 2020 with 12,000 people living there when it was built for 3,000. There the bourgeoisies lock up the surplus population, whom they continue to exploit in the worst conditions, until they are not even useful to them and end up making soap with their ashes.

The Belarusian state is organizing the arrival of migrants at the borders of Europe through Lithuania, Latvia and Poland to lobby against the sanctions and blockades carried out by the EU. More than 3,000 people have tried to enter Lithuania so far this year. Are they Belarusians or from a neighboring country? No, they are mainly from Iraq, transported to Minsk to be sent against the EU borders. The Lithuanian, Latvian and Polish states

have brought the army into the border areas, declaring the state of emergency, arresting the migrants and sending them back or leaving them in the forests where they end up freezing to death. Poland has approved the construction of a wall and Germany is deploying its border police to make sure that Poland does not do the same to them.

The French bourgeois state also has no qualms about pressuring the United Kingdom across the English Channel by letting immigrants cross to the English side; the response of the English bourgeoisie has been to put a warship on patrol in the waters of the Channel and like other neighboring countries, to propose to pay third countries located on another continent to send there all those who request asylum.

The EU has set up its own border police (Frontex), with its own budget, with a thousand agents that will be increased to ten thousand, for the pushback of immigrants, as a demonstration of its ever-closer imperialist union in the military sphere and as a demonstration that the EU is shaping itself as a single state with a common external border.

The bourgeoisie is interested in controlled immigration in order to be able to lower the price of labor power and carry out a fierce exploitation of the immigrant working class without papers at the moments of the economic cycle that interest them, but their massive and uncontrolled arrival is a problem for them.

In order to control this mass of immigrants, the bourgeoisie counts on NGOs and "humanitarian" organizations whose function is that of gendarme and jailer. They are in charge of making the inventory of the number of immigrants arriving, controlling their confinement, repressing rebellions, making sure that they go to work for free wherever the bourgeoisie needs them, imposing the harsh conditions in which they are locked up, and they are the police's informers. All this at the cost of subsidies and millionaire donations. **This is the true criminal character of these organizations despite all their tearful and altruistic verbiage.**

The official figures of deaths on the migratory routes given by the bourgeoisie cannot be taken into account. Officially they say that some 4,000 people die a year, but who can count all those who have been swallowed up by the sea, the deserts, the mountains, rivers and forests and all the murders that the border police and mafias hide?

These masses of people used by the various bourgeoisies as battering rams are made up of an amalgam of social strata ruined in their countries of origin, a mixture of proletarian and petty-bourgeois origins. Often, the exorbitant prices charged by the "coyotes" and various mafias cannot be paid by the proletariat, only by the petty bourgeoisie. This petty bourgeoisie is proletarianized and ends up working in the countries of arrival with high exploitation in sectors in which the bourgeoisie imposes very low working conditions (farm laborers, cleaning, meat processing, hotels, construction, etc.). One of the reasons why, in spite of these asphyxiating working conditions, there are not more explosions in the working centers is that an important sector of these proletarianized petty bourgeois elements have not renounced to continue being what they were in their countries of origin, petty bourgeoisie. Their dream is to save to set up a business in their country of origin, buy a house, etc. and to fulfill this petty bourgeois dream they accept the worst working conditions, making it difficult to polarize the struggle in the workplaces. To this is added the influx of the local ruined petty bourgeoisie itself, with the same results: "*(…) in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are always broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors. Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of new "middle strata" are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism (…). These new small producers are just as inevitably being cast again into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world-outlook should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad workers' parties.*" (Marxism and Revisionism, Lenin, 1908).

Opportunism is characterized by making the proletariat defend the views of the petty bourgeoisie, instead of the ruined petty bourgeoisie renouncing its views and embracing those of the proletariat.

This mixing of proletarianized masses of the world in the centers of capitalist exploitation, at the immediate level, feeds the petty bourgeois ideologies of origin, combined with the dream of escaping proletarianization. But **at the same time, it is an opportunity to overcome national narrowness and to reintroduce communist positions in the countries of origin**. Historically, many communists have been formed in immigration. As an example, the Chinese Communist Party (the original Marxist one, not its later Maoist degeneration) was founded by engineers who went to learn in French factories and came into contact with communist ideas there, later introducing them in China.

The task of the communists is to denounce the criminal use of the proletarianized masses as a weapon between imperialisms, to combat the spread of the views of the petty bourgeoisie (wherever it is or comes from) among the proletariat, to teach these proletarianized layers that in capitalism there is no place for them as "middle classes" and that they must embrace the revolutionary views of the proletariat, to organize jointly for the immediate struggle the proletarianized masses overcoming any nationalism or language division, to spread the positions of Marxism in the place of action and to introduce them in the places of origin of the immigrant workers, taking advantage of the relations they still maintain with these countries.

Only once in history has there been a country in which any worker in the world, without the need for any formalism, was automatically a full citizen: Russia after the October Revolution, before the Stalinist counterrevolution destroyed the class character of that revolution with the lie of "socialism in one country".

Only the anti-capitalist social revolution will be able to bring forth, from the ashes of criminal capitalism, a classless society, without state or borders, without forced or illegal immigration, without wars or hunger, without private property, money or wage labor: Communism.

In the current capitalist worldwide overproduction crisis, we are witnessing a process of slaughter of the middle classes. Economically stifled, they are the first to mobilize to avoid their ruin and do not hesitate to call upon the working class to defend their interests. The more they are doomed to ruin, the more virulent their mobilizations can become, but this does not mean that they will become revolutionary.

The petty bourgeoisie is like **WATER:** it can boil and do it in the most resounding way but it can never catch fire. The proletarian class is like **MATCHSTICK:** it appears inert and still, but it has the potential to ignite and generate a revolutionary fire. **The condition for the matchstick to maintain its capacity to ignite, its revolutionary potential, is that it does not get wet with water, even if it is the most scandalous and bubbling water in the world.**

"The middle strata - the small industrialist, the small merchant, the artisan, the peasant - all of them fight against the bourgeoisie to save from ruin their existence as such middle strata. They are not, therefore, revolutionary, but conservative. Moreover, they are reactionary, since they seek to turn back the wheel of history. They are revolutionary only when they have before them the prospect of their imminent transition to the proletariat, thus defending not their present interests, but their future interests, when they abandon their own views to adopt those of the proletariat." (Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx and Engels, 1848).

One of the defining characteristics of opportunism consists precisely in sustaining theoretically or in practice the inverse postulate: that the proletarians must abandon their revolutionary communist program and adopt the views of the middle strata, thus the proletariat defending the present interests... of the middle strata.

The protests and demonstrations from April to June 2021 in Colombia have as their basis the slaughter of these middle classes (petty and middle bourgeoisie of the countryside and the city, labor aristocracy, students) and, for this reason, they arouse the sympathies of the ideological currents of the petty bourgeoisie in other countries, also of the more sibylline ones that try to present the movement as a proletarian movement.

On April 28th, 2021, the so-called National Strike Committee (CNP) called for a new strike/employer lockout in Colombia against the following tax reform: *"(...) as of 2022, those earning more than 2.4 million pesos per month (about 663 current US dollars) must declare income tax, (...). For 2023, it is foreseen to extend the base to those who receive more than 1.7 million pesos per month (about $470). It is also proposed that public or private sector workers earning more than 10 million pesos per month (about US$2,765) will be charged during the second half of this year the "temporary and solidarity tax on high income", in addition to income tax. Other envisaged measures (...): it raises the surtaxes on gasoline and diesel, modifies the tax charged for the use of fossil fuels and creates a national tax on single-use plastic products used for packaging, wrapping or packing goods. (...) The proposed law contemplates the charging of VAT, which is 19%, to the rates of public utilities of energy, aqueduct and sewerage and domiciliary gas, for users of social strata 4, 5 and 6, the highest on the scale."* (France 24, 16-04-2021).

Against whom was this reform directed? Marxism demands that we start from the analysis of the material basis of the relations of production: *"Human beings have always been, in politics, foolish victims of the deceit of others and of their own, and will continue to be so as long as they do not learn to discover behind all the moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises, the interests of one class or another."* (The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism, Lenin, 1913).

Let's look at data from DANE (National Administrative Department in charge of planning, survey, processing, analysis and diffusion of official statistics in Colombia): in 2020, **63.8% of wage workers earned less than one minimum wage ($248).**

January – October (2017 – 2020)
Total

	Up to 1.0 minimum wage	From 1.0 to 2.0 minimum wages	More than 2.0 minimum wages
	%	%	%
2017	58,0	28,5	13,5
2018	56,6	31,2	12,2
2019	60,8	26,7	12,5
2020	63,8	24,8	11,4

	Less than 0.9 minimum wages	From 0.9 to 1.1 minimum wages	More than 1.1 minimum wages
2018	44,2	22,2	33,6
2019	43,2	24,6	32,2
2020	48,6	22,5	28,9

Source: DNAE (https://twitter.com/DANE_Colombia/status/1335975184067686402)

Statistics show the gradual proletarianization of the sectors of the labor aristocracy and the petty bourgeoisie. From the combination of the segmentations provided and the value of the minimum wage for 2020, the following table emerges:

Percentage of employees by salary range (Colombia, 2020)		
MW < 272.8$ (MW < 1,1)	272.8$ <= MW <= 496$ (1,1 <= MW <= 2,0)	496$ < MW (2,0 < MW)
71.1%	17.5%	11.4%

We see that **the obligation to file income tax returns affected less than 11.4% of wage earners in 2022 and slightly more than 11.4% in 2023.** 88.6% of wage workers were not affected by the tax reform because 71.1% earn below $272.8 and another 17.5% earn between this amount and $496. Evidently, the mass of the proletariat was also not affected by the planned tax on salaries of more than $2,765 per month.

Who makes up the National Strike Committee?

"National Indigenous Organization of Colombia ONIC, LGBTI for Peace; Coordinating Committee of Social Organizations COS; Popular Feminist Organizations; Women for Peace; Confederation of Colombian Pensioners CPC; Patriotic March; National Association of High School Students – ANDES; Colombian Association of University Students – ACEU; National Association of Peasant Reserve Zones Anzorc; National Coordinating Committee of Coca, Poppy and Marijuana Growers COCCAM. The National Afro-descendant Unity UNAFRO. National Union for Rural Integration UNIR, Departmental Roundtable for Human Rights and Territory of Cesar, Caribbean Women's Network, FUNDABIENESTAR, Foundation for Sustainable Development of the Colombian Pacific, Association of Peasants and Landless Communities of Cesar ASOCAMTICE, Afro-Caribbean Women's Network REMA, Afro, Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquero Community Organization, Residents in Baranoa ASCAFROB, Association of Catatumbo Farmers ASAMCAT, Association for the Development of Families APRODEFA, Ecumenical Roundtable for Peace, Association of Toco Farmers ASO, Deep Colombia Association, National Federation of Agricultural Trade Unions FENSUAGRO, Cooperative Multiactive Agricultural and Livestock Farming Enchantment of Rovira Tolima COOPAMARO, Raizal Youth Organization, The Network of Spokeswomen Párala Ya, The Trade Union Association of University Professors - ASPU, The Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights - CPDH, National Classist Trade Union

Collective Guillermo Marín, Popular Democratic Youth Judep, Women's Organizations of the Colombian People OMPC, National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, Movement for the Constituent Assembly, Coordinator of Organizations and Social Movements of Colombia Comosoc, Communist Party, Patriotic Union, National Communal Observatory of Human Rights, Communal Observatory of Colombia, Guillermo Ferguson Group, classist union leaders of the CUT, FECODE and national, departmental and sectoral unions. ". In this interclassist front no one is missing, from the Ecumenical Roundtable to the students, passing through the various organizations of rural businessmen (FENSUAGRO, National Coordinator of Coca, Poppy and Marijuana Growers, etc.), the union service companies and reaching the anti-communist Communist Party of Colombia, integrated in the Patriotic Union.

Consistent with its petty bourgeois character, the CNP had sent in June 2020 to the current government a list of demands that they continued to demand in the strikes of April 2021: *"(...) 2. Basic emergency income (...) Moratorium on the payment of mortgage and consumer loans, (...) 3.* ***Defense of national production*** *(agricultural, industrial, artisanal, peasant) and employment with rights. (...)* ***cancellation of agricultural credits and subsidies for the production of peasants and small and medium producers and a public procurement program for agricultural production.*** *No deterioration in the conditions of workers and pensioners. (...) 4. Support for the public education system aimed at guaranteeing* ***free of charge enrollment*** *in public higher education institutions and subsidies aimed at guaranteeing continuity of studies in private higher education institutions and support for the cultural sector. (...) 5.* ***No privatization of Ecopetrol's pipeline transportation network.*** *(...)* ***issue currency through the Bank of the Republic,*** *use international reserves, carry out a temporary moratorium and renegotiate the foreign debt and* ***suspend tax exemptions for large companies and financial capital****".* (Agency of Labor Information- AIL, 20-07-2020).

No workers' demands: subsidies for the agrarian bourgeoisie, cancellation of their bank loans... For the workers: employment with rights and no deterioration of their working conditions; the same as saying nothing or the same as saying what the petty bourgeoisie has been ruminating for centuries: *"As for the workers, they will have to continue being wage earners, for whom, however, the democratic party will procure higher wages, better working conditions and a more secure existence. The democrats hope to realize this program through the State and municipal administration and through charitable institutions. In concrete terms: they aspire to corrupt the working class with tranquility, and thus to lull its revolutionary spirit with passing concessions and comforts. "* (Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist League, K. Marx, March 1850). If anyone is left in any doubt as to the petty-bourgeois character of this platform, its predecessors can be found in "The Class Struggles in France" (K. Marx, 1851), "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte" (K. Marx, 1850) and in the "Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist League" (K. Marx, March 1850).

On April 28th, 2021, a strike began against the tax reform and to demand the above points. The small and medium agrarian and transport bourgeoisie blocked roads and highways. The attack against the petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy and its consequent entry into boiling, evidently unleashed outbursts in the poorest sectors of the proletariat which were projected in a spontaneous and disorganized way in the form of looting. There was looting in shopping malls and supermarkets from which the proletariat took food, and in gas stations to stock up on fuel, police stations were set on fire... The city where most looting and confrontations with the police were concentrated was Cali, and specifically the poorest neighborhoods such as Siloé, La Luna, Puerto Rellena. Cali is the third most populated city in Colombia and where there is a higher unemployment rate. *"By cities, Bogota registered an unemployment rate of 17.2%, while in Cali it was 24.3%, in Medellin it was 15.8%, in Barranquilla 9.6% and in Bucaramanga 12.6%. "* (Europapress, 30-06-2021).

On May 2nd, the government withdrew the tax reform. The Minister of Finance resigned, followed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In mid-May, the health system reform was withdrawn.

Several cities in the country were militarized and the government itself isolated Valle del Cauca sending *"10,000 police and 2,100 military (...). "* (La Vanguardia, 11-05-2021).

On May 16th the government began negotiations with the CNP. On June 1st, the CNP already began calling for the unblocking of the highways despite the fact that negotiations with the government broke down only five days later. In June the students entered the scene, in charge of lifting the blockades altogether, especially in Cali: *"For the month of June 2021, the blockades began with a quantity below the number that was presented on the last day of May (16 vs 12). (...) In this sense, a decision that marked an important turning point was the prioritization of life and human rights that led to the establishment of dialogues with the leaders of the social movements participating in the strike as a mechanism for conflict resolution. This decision was accompanied by the recognition of the Unión de Resistencias Cali (URC) – "Primera Línea Somos Tod@s* [Cali Union of Resistances (URC) - "We Are All First Line"]*, (...) the dialogue table with the URC was institutionalized (...). "* (Security and Coexistence Report, January-June 2021, Cali Mayor's Office).

The official speech of the agreement was given by a priest: *"In addition to the local authorities,* ***the accompaniment of the archdiocese, the social and indigenous movement,*** *the coordination of the Table for Peace and Justice, human rights organizations, the MAPP-OEA, UN Human Rights and the United Nations Verification Mission is highlighted"* (El Tiempo, 02-06-2021). These groups of the Church and the rural petty bourgeoisie are those who had initiated the movement and later controlled the situation: *"****Our struggle is peaceful*** *in search of guaranteeing the rights to social protest, peace and life. Therefore, we reiterate that* ***it does not obey the dynamics of the URC to plan or carry out attacks against state institutions*** *(...)."* (Communications Committee, URC, 10-06-2021).

On June 11th, they unblocked the Siloé neighborhood, issuing this announcement: ***"We achieved recognition*** *(...)* ***by the municipal administration, national positioning and international recognition*** *(...) a dialogue table was established to negotiate transformations in our city and territories (...).* ***We overturned the tax reform.*** *We overturned the health reform. We achieved the resignation of Minister Carrasquilla and Foreign Minister Claudia Blum.* ***We achieved a subsidy of 25% of the salary for companies that formally hire young people*** *and the creation of the program:* ***Young Owners,*** *with which it is expected that young people will have easier access to purchase housing (...)".* (Unión de resistencias comuna 20, Comunicado conjunto glorieta de la lucha Siloé punto de resistencia la Nave [Union of Resistances Comuna 20, Join Communication Siloé Fight Roundabout La Nave Resistance Point], 11-06-2021).

They put their foot in the bourgeois institutions, got the companies a subsidy of 25% of the payrolls and facilities for the purchase of their housing. In return, they sent everyone home.

Between the CNP and the aspirants to the chair of the URC,

they unblocked the highways: *"1,003 road blockades in the country have already been lifted. (...) reopening the roads seems to have become a priority not only for the Government, the private sector and the citizens in general,* ***but also for the National Strike Committee (CNP), which requested its regional representatives to lift the road closures."*** (Portfolio, 01-06-2021). On June 17th the CNP announced the end of the mobilizations.

The petty and medium bourgeoisie mobilized to obtain concessions from the government, to carry out its parliamentary campaign and at the same time to open the escape valve of the pressure cooker of misery that the working class lives in order to be able to control the working class neighborhoods, exercise bloody repression, militarize them and instill terror among the proletariat. Officially there were 75 deaths and 548 disappearances from April 28th to June 17th, most of them in the working-class neighborhoods. And the dead will continue to be laid every day by the working class, only for the interests of other classes.

Cali - like many working-class cities in the world - is a powder keg and the boiling water is quick to soak it after it has been stirred up. As long as it continues to be soaked with water, boiling or freezing, the powder keg will not burn and will only produce looting as an escape valve. These lootings are precisely what excites the spontaneist currents of the "radical" petty bourgeoisie and serve them to falsely affirm the proletarian character of the movement.

Chew and digest this explanation of Engels: *"When the French workers wrote on the walls of the houses during each of the revolutions: "Mort aux voleurs! Death to the thieves!", and indeed shot more than one, they did not do so in a fit of enthusiasm for property, but fully conscious that first of all it was necessary to get rid of this gang. Every workers' leader who uses elements of the lumpenproletariat for his personal guard and who relies on them, proves by this single fact that he is a traitor to the movement."* (Preface to The Peasant War in Germany, 1870).

Looting is a DESPERATE INDIVIDUAL EXIT, mimetization of the petty-bourgeois character of the movement whose echo it represents. The proletarian revolution and even a class insurrection will not only not be distracted by looting, but must first of all expropriate by force and take control of these distribution centers and proceed to their organized and centralized distribution among the working class. Simultaneously, and on the basis of this control and the expropriation of the means of production, it will confront in an offensive struggle (and not of "resistance") the forces of the bourgeois order.

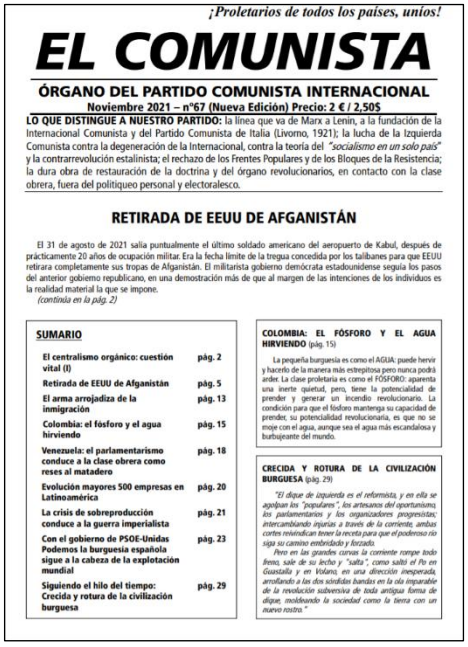
But, for this, the proletarian matchstick must conquer its independence from the petty-bourgeois boiling water, must weave its organizations of immediate struggle outside the influence of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, must constitute itself as a class and, therefore, as a political party (Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx and Engels, 1848), organ of leadership without which the working class is a class for Capital, but not *for itself* (The Poverty of Philosophy, K. Marx, 1847).

To the conservative character of the petty and middle bourgeoisie fits like a glove the concept of "resistance" and, better still that of "resistances", let us remember that they fight *"to save from ruin their existence as such middle strata. They are not, therefore, revolutionary, but conservative"*. The proletariat in its immediate struggle can develop a struggle in which we defend ourselves, but in its broad sense it does not carry out a struggle of "resistance", but a struggle for the suppression of the existing relations of production, in the words of the Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848): *"Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist Revolution.* ***The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!"***

READ, SUPPORT AND SPREAD THE COMMUNIST PRESS!

El Comunista nº67 – November 2021

El centralismo orgánico: cuestión vital (I)
Retirada de EEUU de Afganistán
El arma arrojadiza de la inmigración
Colombia: el fósforo y el agua hirviendo
Venezuela: el parlamentarismo conduce a la clase obrera como reses al matadero, a desangrarse en favor del dios capital
Evolución de las mayores 500 empresas en Latinoamérica
La crisis de sobreproducción conduce a la guerra imperialista
Con el gobierno de PSOE-Unidas Podemos la burguesía española sigue a la cabeza de la explotación mundial
Siguiendo el hilo del tiempo: Crecida y rotura de la civilización burguesa



¡Proletarios de todos los países, unios!

EL COMUNISTA

ÓRGANO DEL PARTIDO COMUNISTA INTERNACIONAL

Noviembre 2021 – nº67 (Nueva Edición) Precio: 2 € / 2,50$

LO QUE DISTINGUE A NUESTRO PARTIDO: la línea que va de Marx a Lenin, a la fundación de la Internacional Comunista y del Partido Comunista de Italia (Livorno, 1921); la lucha de la Izquierda Comunista contra la degeneración de la Internacional, contra la teoría del *"socialismo en un solo país"* y la contrarrevolución estalinista; el rechazo de los Frentes Populares y de los Bloques de la Resistencia; la dura obra de restauración de la doctrina y del órgano revolucionarios, en contacto con la clase obrera, fuera del politiqueo personal y electoralesco.

RETIRADA DE EEUU DE AFGANISTÁN

El 31 de agosto de 2021 salía puntualmente el último soldado americano del aeropuerto de Kabul, después de prácticamente 20 años de ocupación militar. Era la fecha límite de la tregua concedida por los talibanes para que EEUU retirara completamente sus tropas de Afganistán. El militarista gobierno demócrata estadounidense seguía los pasos del anterior gobierno republicano, en una demostración más de que al margen de las intenciones de los individuos es la realidad material la que se impone.

(continúa en la pág. 2)

SUMARIO

El centralismo orgánico: cuestión vital (I)	pág. 2
Retirada de EEUU de Afganistán	pág. 5
El arma arrojadiza de la inmigración	pág. 13
Colombia: el fósforo y el agua hirviendo	pág. 15
Venezuela: el parlamentarismo conduce a la clase obrera como reses al matadero	pág. 18
Evolución mayores 500 empresas en Latinoamérica	pág. 20
La crisis de sobreproducción conduce a la guerra imperialista	pág. 21
Con el gobierno de PSOE-Unidas Podemos la burguesía española sigue a la cabeza de la explotación mundial	pág. 23
Siguiendo el hilo del tiempo: Crecida y rotura de la civilización burguesa	pág. 29

COLOMBIA: EL FÓSFORO Y EL AGUA HIRVIENDO (pág. 15)

La pequeña burguesía es como el AGUA: puede hervir y hacerlo de la manera más estrepitosa pero nunca podrá arder. La clase proletaria es como el FÓSFORO: aparenta una inerte quietud, pero, tiene la potencialidad de prender y generar un incendio revolucionario. La condición para que el fósforo mantenga su capacidad de prender, su potencialidad revolucionaria, es que no se moje con el agua, aunque sea el agua más escandalosa y burbujeante del mundo.

CRECIDA Y ROTURA DE LA CIVILIZACIÓN BURGUESA (pág. 29)

"El dique de izquierda es el reformista, y en ella se agolpan los "populares", los artesanos del oportunismo, los parlamentarios y los organizadores progresistas; intercambiando injurias a través de la corriente, ambas cortes reivindican tener la receta para que el poderoso río siga su camino embridado y forzado.

Pero en las grandes curvas la corriente rompe todo freno, sale de su lecho y "salta", como saltó el Po en Guastalla y en Volano, en una dirección inesperada, arrollando a las dos sólidas bandas en la vía imparable de la revolución subversiva de toda antigua forma de dique, moldeando la sociedad como la tierra con un nuevo rostro."

VENEZUELA: PARLIAMENTARISM ALWAYS LEADS THE WORKING CLASS, LIKE CATTLE TO THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE, TO BLEED TO DEATH IN FAVOR OF THE CAPITAL GOD

Back in the thirties of the twentieth century, the first demonstrations of discontent of the oil workers were carried out to demand that they be provided with water in the workplaces, these being driven by European immigrant workers, struggles and organizational experiences that did not overcome trade unionism, since these movements and struggles of the Venezuelan workers were captured first by the Stalinist party, PCV (Communist Party of Venezuela) and then by the Acción Democrática (AD) and the Social Christian Party (COPEI). This is the origin of all the trade unionists, all the divisions that these parliamentary parties have suffered. The present trade unionists are the natural children, cousins, grandchildren and nephews of the party of the bourgeoisie, be it Causa R, Bandera Roja, Vanguardia Popular, Izquierda Diario, Conciencia por la Unidad, the PSL, Trotskyists and Gramscians, to name a few.

During the 1930s there existed the Caribbean bureau, an organism that was part of the degenerated Communist International and whose function was to organize, coordinate and help to the Stalinist parties in the Caribbean countries. At the beginning of 1931 the Caribbean bureau gathered in Caracas the first cell of the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV), as part of the policy of Stalinist Russia for its expansion, forming this type of organizations for the development of the counterrevolutionary policy of the construction of socialism in one country, the inter-class fronts, and workers' government. That is what comes to Venezuela, calling it Marxism. In this sense, no organization of the so-called left has been based on the theoretical weapon of Marxism as a science.

When parliamentarism reaches its ceiling, and the proletarian masses lose confidence in parliament, ultra-nationalist movements emerge, like the one that manifested itself in Venezuela with the "coup d'état" attempts in 1992 and 1994, which to take root sought contact with the ultra-nationalism of the Stalinists of the PCV (pro-Russian), Bandera Roja (pro-Chinese), the PRV group of Douglas Bravo, Causa R, etc. From these currents the party of the officers of the capitalist army was co-opting and organizing its militants and propagandists within the so-called civil society. With these ex-enemies of the bourgeois army the great electoral network was assembled which led the military coup plotters to win the presidential elections of the republic without cannon shots, without tanks or war planes, without bombs, but with the ideological-political force of the votes, of the "peaceful" ultranationalist and patriotic parliamentarism... they presented a moderate nationalist project economically supported by the gringo company Coca Cola, the Spanish banks BBV, Santander, etc. and the Army Party won the elections forming the government since February 1999.

This ragged capitalist state is destined to explode. If it has not exploded, it is because of the ideological attraction instilled by Chavist patriotism, linked to the crumbs distributed, together with the ideological attraction, by religious FAITH, cultivated by the Chavist governments. It should be recalled that the Chavist army party came to government after another long crisis from 1983 to 1999, with the massacre of the "Sacudón" or "Caracazo" of 1989. This human carnage imposed an iron barracks discipline on the proletariat in general. Discipline that continued to grow with the defeat of the failed coups d'état (1992-1994). The 1998 elections soaked the barracks disciplinarism of the neighborhoods. The companies and the very young working-class neighborhoods were influenced and controlled by the activist groups, including the delinquent drug dealers, which had been formed under the aegis of the clandestinity and the guerrillas and their support groups. When almost all these groups or movements passed to the Party of the Army-Chavismo, the Venezuelan working class was momentarily orphaned even to organize at least a minimal defense of its living and working conditions, it was delivered bound hand and foot by those who had been using it until then. In order to be able to defend ourselves even on the immediate plane, it is necessary to unmask the Army-Chavismo Party as a Mussolinian party, parafascist and not "of the left" (an ambiguous expression if ever there was one), but anti-communist and anti-worker, the same as the party of the Adecos, Copeyanos, Causa R, Bandera Roja and all its splits and the guerrillas: all French-style chauvinism or Venezuelan-style patriotism. The working class is anti-patriotic, it is international and internationalist and that is how its struggle should be.

With the arrival of the crisis, what normally happens between creditor and debtor in the buying and selling activity takes place: the Venezuelan State becomes insolvent, its creditors demand payment. So, how does the government of the day seek a way out of the crisis? By drastically reducing the working and living conditions of the wage earners.

Parliamentarism always presents itself as docile and peaceful, and history has shown that it is violent and bloodthirsty when it comes to defending the interests of the capitalists, and this is valid for Venezuela and the rest of the world.

"The bourgeois parliamentary regimes in their origins opposed with all their energy the right of workers' coalition and strikes, with ferocious criminal laws. Only in 1871 the English parliament, which had centuries of life, suppressed the laws that considered crimes the constitution of workers' unions, trade unions, without ceasing to be, as Marx says, a trade union of capitalists. The French Revolution with a law of 1791 prohibits and punishes workers' associations. In classical liberal thought these make reborn feudal corporations eliminated by the bourgeois revolution.

The terms union and strike with respect to the terms freedom and democracy are on the opposite side of the barricades. In the perfect liberal-democratic state as defined by bourgeois thought any citizen is protected by the laws and by the state being the common father of all, and must on the contrary be condemned as harmful to unlimited personal freedom, of which the most important, according to the bourgeois, is that of selling oneself in the conditions of the free labor market to the capitalist exploiter.

As the workers' organization is subjugated to the state, as is today the general tendency in all countries, whether in the form of coercion or in the form of subordination of the trade union leaders to the bourgeois parties, of which the latter is evidently worse, the problem of the development of economic struggles and strikes in a revolutionary sense becomes more complex and arduous". (Following the Thread of Time, January 19th to 26th of 1949).

In Venezuela, the parliament decreed memorandum 2792 issued by the ministry with labor competence on October 11th, 2018, which set the guidelines for negotiations or discussions of collective bargaining agreements within the framework of the program of recovery, growth and economic prosperity. This document authorizes disregarding contractual and wage rights,

setting a minimum wage that in reality is a maximum to which any higher wage, the result of agreements or previous struggles, can be legally reduced. History has shown that the capitalism of 1848, at Marx and Engels' time, and the capitalism of the XXI century, in the year 2021, is the same: when the crisis arrives, the parliament, at each moment of the capitalist economic cycle, votes laws tailored to the needs or the vices of the packs of the steppe wolves of the bosses. And so, today the real situation of the working class is that the cost of the basic basket is around $600, the food basket is around $300, the economy is totally dollarized with a salary paid in bolivars, being the minimum wage of 7,000,000 Bs monthly, and 3,000,000 Bs of the cesta ticket (equivalent to less than $2.5, at the dollar price of 02-09-2021), which every time is lowered with the daily rise of the dollar in relation to the bolivar. And, together with this, a health system in detriment and a growing deterioration of public services.

This anti-worker policy of continuous attack on the different sectors of the proletariat has been carried out with the active or passive support of all the subsidized trade unions, these trade unionists of yesterday and today in Venezuela, have organized the disorganization of the Venezuelan working class in exchange for political and administrative posts in the different state dependencies. As an example: the former Minister of Education Aristóbulo Isturiz, an old trade unionist who has lived subsidized by all governments, is not remembered with a piece of chalk or an eraser in a classroom. When the education workers, out of necessity of not starving to death because of low salaries, go on strike, it is Aristóbulo, this trade union minister, who meets and reads the primer to his former colleagues in the subsidized education unions, declaring that all those workers who do not fall into his line, he fires them and forces them to resign with persecution, repression and low salaries. And this policy of state terror, has allowed the current government to maintain itself without any independent workers' resistance from this sector of workers that in previous years was a combative sector to defend their salaries and collective contracts. This is what has happened with the struggle that since 2017 health workers undertook, for better working conditions and wages. The state imprisoned doctors and nurses while the movement was out of control. The national executive secretary of the health workers Pablo Zambrano took control of the conflict, placing himself at the forefront of such demonstrations, deluding especially the nurses who remained in the street protesting to later betray them. His objective was to win a space for himself and thus go to the elections as a member of parliament. Today he is already a member of parliament. The usual story, parliamentarism uses the proletarian struggle to reach the institutional seats.

The struggle and combativeness of the working class of the basic enterprises of Guayana have been absorbed by parliamentarism, yesterday, when those so-called ultra-left, anarchist, Trotskyist and Gramscian parties were at the forefront of this struggle, Andrés Velásquez, one of the most emblematic unionists in the struggle in the basic enterprises, representing the Causa R party, was elected governor for the state of Bolívar. Today, the struggles undertaken by the workers of these basic enterprises for wage improvements are doomed to failure, they are drowning and will drown in the warm or boiling waters of the militant trade unionists of the parliamentary political parties. Trade unionist Rubén González has declared that: "*it is up to all Venezuelans at this time to step forward in defense of the popular mandate (...) that seeks a democratic and peaceful solution to the serious crisis that the country is going through.*" (Primicia, 11-03-2021). He refers to the "*agreement of 37 political parties and more than 100 organizations of the civil society with the signing of the pact for freedom and free and transparent elections*" (Primicia, 11-03-2021). Another trade unionist adds: "*this act was a true call to the unity of the country, the only party where we must be a militant is Venezuela*" (Primicia, 11-03-2021). So, nothing new in the panorama in the struggles of the workers of the basic enterprises.

With the constant repression by the capitalist state, they use delinquency, and they have figures like the famous Koki, as an entity of distraction, and to control any attempt of organization of the proletariat in the neighborhoods, giving them the distribution of the CLAP bags (Comité Local de Abastecimiento y Producción [Supply and Production Local Committee]), sales of domestic gas bottles, drinking water. And when the state foresees that a social explosion may arise, (like the 1989 Caracazo), it takes over the neighborhoods with all its security agencies under the pretext of looking for the name they themselves have created (Bambi, Wilexi, Koki, el Picuri, el Conejo, and others), killing workers, raiding their homes, locating them as part of the gangs. On the other hand, when workers organize independently of the unions, they are persecuted and imprisoned, such is the case of the nurses of Anzoátegui state, the teachers of Sucre state, whose only crime was to demand better salaries. This confirms the politics of yesterday's and today's parliamentarism.

This is the reality that the working class and the Venezuelan proletariat live and face, theoretically disarmed without a class organization to serve as an instrument for the struggle for better working conditions and wages.

Proletarian class brothers, we need to recover class unionism, our indications are not new, nor easy or magical. The working class will not be able to fight even for its immediate demands if it does not break with the bourgeois policy that influences and directs the entire trade union apparatus, breaking with its organizational control, tending to form its own economic struggle organizations independent of the parliamentary political parties, fighting the policy of submission or solidarity to the national or corporate economy, fighting and unmasking the democratic-parliamentary regime as a classic instrument of domination of the dictatorship of capital. Only in this way will we be able to fight for better labor and social conditions at the same time that we prepare the conditions to abolish in a moment of history the slavery of wage labor.

FOR THE LIBERATION OF IMPRISONED WORKERS!
FOR THE ABOLITION OF WAGE LABOR!
IF CAPITALISM SURVIVES EXPLOITING THE WORKING CLASS, LET'S MAKE CAPITALISM EXPLODE, WITH ALL ITS VIRUSES AND WARS!

EVOLUTION OF THE 500 LARGEST COMPANIES BY SALES IN LATIN AMERICA

The following table, based on data from the bourgeois magazine "América Economía", shows the tendencies of imperialism's development in Latin America. The states are listed in descending order of their participation in the 500 largest companies by turnover in 2021.

Brazil maintains its first place in the global ranking, although it has dropped from half of the list to a third. In the top 20, it is tied with Mexico, given that Itaipu Binacional, which is also owned by Paraguay and is assigned to the latter, should be added to the 8 that appear. Mexico has been climbing positions in the general ranking, jumping from 94 in 2008 to 142 in 2021, approaching Brazil's current 170. Chile had taken off from 1991 to 2008, ranking with 4 companies in the top 20 (now down to 2) and going from 24 to 98 companies in the top 500 (now down to 84). Peru has also lost ground after the 1991-2008 take-off, Colombia has recovered its position after its fall in 2008 and Argentina has seen a steady decline in its participation in the list, while Ecuador, Uruguay, Bolivia, Paraguay, Costa Rica and Panama are very timidly emerging at the bottom of the list.

Venezuela appears in the table despite having been swept out of the ranking. The corresponding line summarizes the result of the policy of oil rentier imperialist capitalism of Chavism: 34 companies in 1991, 2 in 2008, none in 2021.

The two poles of attraction and influence are Brazil and Mexico and the development of their policies and their economic relationship with the big imperialist blocs (USA, China, EU) will mark the main lines of the area.

	1as 20			1as 50			1as 100			1as 500		
	1991	2008	2021	1991	2008	2021	1991	2008	2021	1991	2008	2021
Brazil	7	6	8	22	20	17	44	38	41	254	209	170
Mexico	9	7	9	19	17	23	34	33	39	82	94	142
Chile	1	4	2	3	8	7	4	16	13	24	98	84
Peru	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	10	44	34
Argentina	1	1	1	2	3	2	11	7	3	60	40	32
Colombia	-	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	2	30	13	28
Ecuador	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	3
Uruguay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Bolivia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Paraguay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1
Costa Rica	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Panama	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Venezuela	2	1	-	2	2	-	3	2	-	34	2	-

Source: América Economía

READ, SUPPORT AND SPREAD
THE COMMUNIST PRESS
"INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAN"

****

FOR CORRESPONDENCE (without further data):
Apartado 52076 - 28080 MADRID – ESPAÑA
www.pcielcomunista.org – pci@pcielcomunista.org

*"**In these crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically DESTROYED. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of OVER-PRODUCTION**. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? **Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce.** The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? **On the one hand by enforced DESTRUCTION of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the CONQUEST of new markets, and by the more thorough EXPLOITATION of the old ones.** That is to say, by **paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises**, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented."* (Manifesto of the Communist Party, K. Marx y F. Engels, 1848).

The key words of this passage that films all capitalist crises are: **OVERPRODUCTION**, **DESTRUCTION**, **CONQUEST** and **EXPLOITATION**. The subsequent development of capitalism has only confirmed this.

The tendency of the rate of profit to fall

Capital is composed of constant capital **c** (means of production: raw materials and machinery wear and tear), variable capital **v** (paid labor time or wages) and surplus-value **s** (unpaid labor time of the working class). The division $s' = {}^{s}/_{v}$ gives us the rate of surplus-value or degree of exploitation: unpaid time / paid time. The division $p' = {}^{s}/_{(c+v)}$ expresses the rate or share of profit, the surplus value extracted divided by the total invested capital: *"The rate of profit is the motive power of capitalist production. Things are produced only so long as they can be produced with a profit."* (Das Kapital, Volume III, Chapter XV, K. Marx). formulates the lapidary condemnation of the capitalist system, **the rate of profit tends to decrease with its own development**: *"The progressive tendency of the general rate of profit to fall is, therefore, just an expression peculiar to the capitalist mode of production of the progressive development of the social productivity of labour."* (Das Kapital, Volume III, Chapter XIII, K. Marx).

If we call **T** the entire working day (**s** + **v**, unpaid time plus paid time), we can divide the numerator and denominator of **p'** by **T**. We will obtain an equivalent version of the formula in which all the components refer to the whole working day: s_T is the ratio of surplus value to total working time (between 0 and 100%), v_T is the ratio of wages to total working time (between 0 and 100%), c_T is the value of raw materials and machinery wear processed in a day (between 0 and infinity).

$$p' = \frac{s}{c+v} = \frac{{}^{s}/_{T}}{{}^{c}/_{T} + {}^{v}/_{T}} = \frac{[0:1]}{[0:\infty] + [0:1]}$$

Let us look at the most favorable case to capitalism, with wages tending to zero and practically the entire working day as surplus value. $v \to 0$, s→ T:

$$p' = \frac{s_T}{c_T + v_T} \to \frac{1}{{}^{c}/_{T} + 0} = \frac{1}{c/T}$$

But... what is ${}^{c}/_{T}$ but the **degree of technological development** which only increases exponentially with the development of capitalism? A constant numerator (1) divided by a denominator that only increases, tends to 0. Therefore, historically and despite the increase in the degree of exploitation, the rate of profit tends to fall:

$$rate\ of\ profit = p' = \frac{s}{c+v} \to 0$$

Marx also enumerates the causes that make this law a tendency: the increasing intensity of exploitation, the depression of wages below the value of labor power, cheapening of elements of constant capital, relative over-population, foreign trade and the increase of stock capital.

But the tendency to fall of the rate of profit prevails and forces an increase in competition between capitalists, a sharpening of the commercial war between them and the necessary destruction of means of production and labor power (the denominator of division!) to relaunch another anarchic and chaotic cycle of accumulation for accumulation's sake.

Destruction to overcome over-production

Let us see with Marx the *exposition of the internal contradictions of the law* of the tendency to fall:

*"A portion of the old capital has to lie unused under all circumstances; it has to give up its characteristic quality as capital, so far as acting as such and producing value is concerned. **The competitive struggle would decide what part of it would be particularly affected**. (…) **The class, as such, must inevitably lose. How much the individual capitalist must bear of the loss, i.e., to what extent he must share in it at all, is decided by STRENGTH and CUNNING**, and competition then becomes a fight among hostile brothers. (…) the loss is distributed in very different proportions and forms, depending on special advantages or previously captured positions, so that **one capital is left unused, another is DESTROYED**, and a third suffers but a relative loss, or is just temporarily depreciated, etc.*

*But **the equilibrium would be restored under all circumstances through the withdrawal or even the DESTRUCTION of more or less capital. This would extend partly to the material substance of capital** (…)*

***The stagnation of production would have laid off a part of the working-class** and would thereby have placed the employed part in a situation, where it would have to submit to a reduction of wages even below the average.*

The ensuing stagnation of production would have prepared – within capitalistic limits – a subsequent expansion of production. And thus the cycle would run its course anew.** (…) **For the rest, the same vicious circle would be described once more under expanded conditions of production, with an expanded market and increased productive forces." (Das Kapital, Volume III, Chapter XV, K. Marx)

The only way for capital to run its cycle again (vicious circle) is the forced destruction of a mass of productive forces. These

productive forces include the material substance of capital itself and labor power, the only source of surplus value. This destruction takes place simultaneously with the conquest of new markets and the more intense exploitation of the old ones, in a struggle of competition in which the decisive factors are force and cunning. For the working class, this means: overexploitation of the employed ones, being cannon fodder for the war between capitalists and the liquidation of the overpopulation unfit for capitalist exploitation.

The ultimate reason for war in capitalism, then, is not victory but destruction: ***"War is the capitalist solution to the crisis; the massive destruction of facilities, means of production and products allows production to recover, and the massive destruction of men remedies the periodic "over-population" that goes hand in hand with over-production."*** (Auswitch or the Big Alibi, Programme Communiste, 1960).

Communists in the face of imperialist war

The Communist International, reorganization of the proletarian movement driven by the victorious Bolshevik revolution in Russia, rising on the ruins of the betrayal of the leaders of the Second International, declared the world proletariat:

*" **'Remember the imperialist war!'** These are the first words addressed by the Communist International to every working man and woman; wherever they live and whatever language they speak. Remember that because of the existence of capitalist society a handful of imperialists were able to force the workers of the different countries for four long years to cut each other's throats. Remember that the war of the bourgeoisie conjured up in Europe and throughout the world the most frightful famine and the most appalling misery. **Remember that without the overthrow of capitalism the repetition of such robber wars is not only possible but inevitable!**"* (Statutes of the Communist International, 2nd Congress, 1920).

In 1920 it was clear to all communists precisely that the fact that the imperialist war was a result of the crisis of relative overproduction of capital imposed the international character of the emancipation of the working class: *"The imperialist war confirmed once again the truth of what could be read in the statutes of the First International: **the emancipation of the working class is neither a local nor a national task but a social and international task.**"* (Statutes of the Communist International, 2nd Congress, 1920).

This was before the severe tactical errors of the "political united front", of the "workers government", of the "workers and peasants government", destroyed the International itself, turning it into a branch subordinated to the needs of the construction of capitalism in Russia. Already in 1934, Stalinist Russia had entered the League of Nations, stigmatized by Lenin as a "thieves' kitchen". In 1943, in the midst of the Second World War, Stalinism dissolved the corpse of the International in order to better divide Europe and the world with the rest of the imperialist powers.

Well, after having exposed all this, in the present situation in which capitalism has spread to the last corner of the world and in the face of the deepening of the current crisis of overproduction and the sharpening of the conflicts between imperialist powers, **what is the international position of the communists?**

Today as yesterday, the communist militant position is that of **revolutionary defeatism**, the transformation of the imperialist war into revolutionary civil war:

*"6. It is the duty of any party wishing to belong to the Third International to expose, not only avowed social-patriotism, but also the falsehood and hypocrisy of social-pacifism. It must systematically demonstrate to the workers that, **without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international arbitration courts, no talk about a reduction of armaments, no "democratic" reorganisation of the League of Nations will save mankind from new imperialist wars.**"* (Terms of Admission into Communist International, 2nd Congress, 1920)

*"How will proletarian women oppose this? Only by cursing all war and everything military, only be demanding disarmament? **The women of an oppressed and really revolutionary class will never accept that shameful role**. They will say to their sons: "You will soon be grown up. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it **to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to exploitation, poverty and war, and not by pious wishes, but by defeating and disarming the bourgeoisie**.""* (The military programme of the proletarian revolution, Lenin, 1916).

*"The proletariat must not only oppose all such wars, but **must also wish for the defeat of its 'own' government** in such wars and **utilise its defeat for revolutionary insurrection**, if an insurrection to prevent the war proves unsuccessful."* (The military programme of the proletarian revolution, Lenin, 1916). Only in this way will we free ourselves definitively from crises and wars, from exploitation and oppression:

*"**Our slogan must be: arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie.** (…) **Only after the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historic mission, to consign all armaments to the scrap-heap**. And the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before."* (The military programme of the proletarian revolution, Lenin, 1916).

If it is true that capitalism leads inevitably to imperialist war, it is no less true that communists will not miss this crossroads to convert this reactionary war into a revolutionary war that will be the tomb of capitalism. Unavoidable condition: a single communist party for all the states of the world, rejecting any ally, firmly founded on the integral Marxist doctrine.

*"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. **The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.***

Working Men of All Countries, Unite!" (Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848).

As an integral part of European imperialism, Spanish and European capitalism go hand in hand in this crisis characterized, among other things, by the issuance of state and corporate debt. As of today, the ECB is buying some 80 billion of debt each month and the Federal Reserve around 120 billion. In the Spanish state, the debt *"(...) in just sixteen months increased by 16.4%, at an average monthly rate of 12,568 million euros, beating one historical record after another with hardly any respite, to exceed 1.42 trillion euros in June, an unprecedented figure (...). This figure is equivalent to 122.1% of GDP. (...) If this rate of slimming were to continue in the future, it would take Spain nearly 23 years to digest the debt accumulated so far during the pandemic alone, (...). "* (Expansión, 18-08-2021).

On the one hand, the Spanish economy breaks the debt record and on the other hand, it has just received, in mid-August, *"more than 69,500 million to which it opts in direct aid, expandable up to 140,000 million if the Executive also resorts to loans. "Spain has received 9,000 million in pre-financing (...)". "* (Expansión, 18-08-2021). The remittance of this money is not free of conditions on the part of the lender, *"the unblocking of the following tranches will be linked to the execution of projects and structural reforms committed to with the European partners, among which those of the labor market and the public pension system stand out (...). "* (Expansión, 18-08-2021)*. "Precisely, the pension reform is one of the major transformations that Brussels demands from Spain to keep the hose of European funds open. "* (Expansión, 19-08-2021).

Reduction of unproductive overheads for the bourgeoisie

A pension reform is imposed and they have already started to work on it. Last July, the comment was already slipped by the *"Minister of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, José Luis Escrivá (...) that those born in the baby boom generation (between 1958 and 1977) will have to "work a little more" if they do not want to see their pension affected. "* (El País, 02-07-2021). What the Spanish bourgeoisie is putting on the table is that the explosion suffered by the pension funds of private companies in the US is something that can happen again, but this time with public pension funds worldwide due to the aging of the population. Currently in the Spanish state *"(...) for every pensioner there are two people of working age. That is, the 19.5 million people affiliated to Social Security pay the more than 9.8 million pensions that the State pays to 8.9 million pensioners ".* (Expansión, 19-08-2021). The Bank of Spain has recently published and highlighted that *"(...) pensions have a much higher profitability than the growth of the economy, and will therefore attract an increasing proportion of resources. In addition, there are more and more pensioners and when the baby boom generation retires, the current 10 million will increase to 15 million in 2048. (...) As of today, pensions already constitute 31% of the expenditure of all Administrations and 45% of the central Administration's disbursements. "* (El País, 12-08-2021).

And for the bourgeois state the figures do not add up, since *"The Social Security needs help to pay pensions. For the past three years, the State has been lending it billions every year to meet its obligations. "* (El País, 06-08-2021). What is behind these statements and cries about the accounts that do not work out? The confirmation that the crisis will continue to be brutally unloaded on the backs of the working class, lengthening the years of contribution or reducing pensions. This capitalist system of production MUST get rid of the increasingly large mass of the working class that is no longer productive (retirees), which is an excessive expense and from which it can no longer appropriate surplus value. How? *"Of the nearly 80,000 coronavirus deaths in Spain, 37.5% (just under 30,000) were nursing home inmates, regardless of whether they died in their room or after being taken to the emergency room. "* (El País, 06-06-2021). These are the figures that the bourgeoisie itself publishes and it must be said loud and clear that the elders were not taken care of and they WERE LEFT TO DIE, locked in their rooms. *"Doctors Without Borders denounced, in a report published in August last year, the "abandonment" of the elderly and the shortcomings of the centers* (...)." (El País, 06-06-2021)*. This report explains that most nursing homes "often preferred that the elderly, as long as there were no reliable test results, remain locked in their rooms (...). The result was appalling: a succession of closed doors, sometimes locked, and people banging and begging to get out. A horror. "* (DWB, August 2020).

This is how the number of pensioners was reduced for the first time in 15 years: *"It is observed when comparing pension withdrawals, caused almost exclusively by deaths, during the first nine months of the year (...). They have increased by 13.5%, nearly 50,000 more than in the same period of the previous year. "* (El País, 25-11-2020). But this is not enough, despite these deaths, what the bourgeoisie sees is the constant increase of pensioners and the corresponding expenditure.

The situation would not seem so serious to them if there were at least a high birth rate to replace those who can no longer be exploited, but this is not the case either. *"For the sixth consecutive year, (...) there were more deaths than births. "* (Expansión, 18-06-2021).

Before the health crisis broke out *"public investment in healthcare in Spain fell by half, according to calculations by the Valencian Institute of Economic Research (known by its Spanish acronym IVIE). Specifically, between 2011 and 2018 (latest available data), investment in the public healthcare sector in Spain fell by 50.7%. That means that, as a consequence of depreciations and wear and tear due to the passage of time, in that period the value of public healthcare assets (buildings, machinery or technology) fell by 10.2%. "* (La Vanguardia, 24-07-2021). The conclusions of the study carried out in El Comunista nº32 (November 1996) on the long-term consequences of the reduction of investment in health care have been fully confirmed. It was materially impossible for the Spanish public health system to respond to the increase of admissions in Intensive Care Units (ICU) since in March 2020 the available beds were 4,404 for the whole Spanish state. A few months later the PSOE-Unidas Podemos government said they would build more hospitals and more such beds. The truth is that no new hospitals have been built (those that were already planned have been completed and the existing ones have been adapted) and many of the beds that have been expanded cannot be put into operation due to the lack of intensivists and adequate technology. There is such a lack of personnel that the vacations of auxiliary personnel cannot be covered and the same story is repeated every year: *"The closure of beds is a phenomenon that occurs every summer throughout Spain (...) this summer more than 9,600 beds have been closed, 2,700 more than last year, as reported by the specialized media ConSalud. Thousands of consultations, diagnostic tests and surgical interventions have also been paralyzed in hospitals. "* (El

País, 18-08-2021). *"Between March and August of last year alone, 93,000 operations were not performed."* (El País, 08-06-2021). This implies that many of these pending operations end up with added complications and/or deaths, although no one bothers to find out: *"The registries in Spain work this badly, we don't know for sure what thousands of people have died of."* (La Vanguardia, 18-10-2020), according to the president of the Spanish Society of Hematology and Hemotherapy.

In the Autonomous Community of Madrid *"the average delay for patients on the structural waiting list for surgery has grown by 63%: from 44.82 days to 73.10. A rise that affects, above all, those who have the most days to go before their surgery arrives."* (El País, 08-06-2021). In primary care, it has been almost impossible to get an appointment for a long time and they have opted to diagnose by telephone and prescribe without having seen the patient or done any tests. There has been a significant increase in the number of applications to receive aid under the Dependency Law, aid which has *"an average monthly amount of 306 euros. The aid to pay for a place in a nursing home does not reach 450 euros per month."* And anyone who intends to receive this assistance should know that he or she will most likely receive it after dying: *"During the last twelve months, the year of the pandemic, 55,375 people died, more than 151 every day, waiting for a response from the Administration or the services and aid."* (La Vanguardia, 16-03-2021). Despite the alleged pandemic context, it does not seem that the European and Spanish bourgeoisies have in mind to prioritize health in the distribution of the billions coming with the Next Generation, which will take less than 3,000 million of the 140,000 euros provided by the EU.

With the PSOE-Unidas Podemos government, the profits of Spain's big employers soar

While it redoubles the pressure on the local working class, Spanish imperialism continues to obtain a large part of its profit from the businesses it has at the international level. In the case of Santander Bank, the profits obtained in the U.S. have gone from 7% in 2019 to 30% in 2021. *"Santander is earmarking 5 billion euros to take over 100% of its subsidiaries in the US and Mexico, which it plans to delist from the stock market."* (Expansión, 25-08-2021). BBVA, on the other hand, is leaving the U.S. to go to other countries: *"Following the exit from the United States, Spain will be the group's only relevant subsidiary in mature economies, further increasing dependence on Mexico and Turkey, which generate almost 45% and 19% of the group's profit, respectively."* (Expansión, 17-11-2020). In 2019 BBVA obtained 42% of Mexico and 9.2% of Turkey. And there has not only been profit for these two entities: *"Large banks - Santander, BBVA, CaixaBank, Sabadell and Bankinter - earned nearly €7,825 million in the first quarter of 2021, compared to losses in the previous year, due to lower provisions to deal with the pandemic and the positive impact of the CaixaBank and Bankia merger."* (La Vanguardia, 10-05-2021). Indeed, it has contributed to the fact that *"(...) the wave of mergers will lead to a practically record workforce reduction this year in Spain. If we add the departures announced as a result of the reduction in the workforce due to the layoffs in progress (Santander España, Ibercaja), early retirement plans in progress (Sabadell) and adjustments derived from mergers in process, the number of departures could be around 17,300 people, around 10% of the total workforce".* (Expansión, 06-04-2021). *"it should be remembered that personnel expenses represent more than half of the total operating expenses of banks (...)".* (La Vanguardia, 19-04-2021) so it is more than likely that they will continue with the layoffs in this sector as they still have room for maneuver: *"(...) Spain continues to be one of the countries with the densest banking network in the world, with just over 45.5 offices per 100,000 adults, according to IMF data."* (La Vanguardia, 08-09-2021). *"Banking has been destroying jobs since the financial crisis of 2008. In total 100,00 since then."* (El País, 03-09-2021).

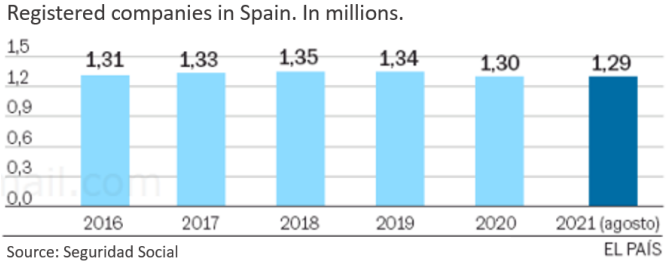
In the **energy sector**, a race has been unleashed to occupy the top positions and obtain aid since the decision was taken by the major world bourgeoisies, and specifically by the German bourgeoisie at European level, to openly support renewable energies in an attempt to leave behind dependence on oil. Spanish companies could not be less and, for the time being, they are well positioned: *"All the energy companies are trying to position themselves in the United States in the green energy market. At the moment, Iberdrola has a portfolio of 13 GW; Naturgy, 12 GW, and Acciona already has 1,000 megawatts in operation. (…)"* (La Vanguardia, 14-05-2021). Also, in the **pharmaceutical sector** and in the health sector, fierce competition has been unleashed by the increase in demand in this sector and specifically with vaccines. As an example, the Catalan multinational Grifols, which *"is moving ahead with the production of a hyperimmune immunoglobulin as a potential passive immunization therapy against Covid-19 at its plant in North Carolina (USA)."* (La Vanguardia, 21-07-2020). *"Grifols has closed a deal with the Egyptian state-owned company National Service Projects Organization (...) The operation will allow Grifols to strengthen its presence in the Middle East and Africa, after consolidating its presence in the USA, Europe and with the Chinese bet".* (La Vanguardia, 25-11-2020).

As we can see, all the businesses of the Catalan big bourgeoisie, a central part of the Spanish bourgeoisie, are making profits and that is why they continue with the plan to deactivate the pro-independence movement. This deactivation was initiated when the sector of the bourgeoisie represented by the PP-Rajoy was removed and replaced by the government of the false left PSOE-Unidas Podemos (umpteenth re-edition of the bourgeois Popular Front) with the aim of avoiding internal confrontations in the Spanish State which would scare away their businesses. The president of Foment del Treball (the main Catalan Employer's Organization) and vice-president of the CEOE (Spanish Confederation of Employer's Organizations) *"(...) Josep Sánchez Llibre, went even further. He not only supported the pardons, but also assured that the "normalization" of relations between the central and Catalan Executives will lead to the return in "months" or "years" of the more than 7,000 firms that since 2017 have moved their headquarters to another autonomous region (...)."* (Expansión, 18-06-2021). The president of the CEOE also publicly supported them. On the economic front, Catalonia began to lose steam as soon as the first pro-independence consultations began, a moment when *"(...) Madrid surpasses Catalonia for the first time in 2014, the year of the first illegal 9-N consultation promoted by Artur Mas, (...) Among the companies that have moved their headquarters from Catalonia to Madrid since 1-O 2017 are CaixaBank, Sabadell, Gas Natural Fenosa, Cellnex, Abertis, Colonial, Catalana Occidente, (...)."* (Expansión, 23-08-2021). And more recently *"Madrid collects 1.1 billion more than Catalonia in personal income tax."* (Expansión, 07-09-2021). The pardons to the visible heads of the small and medium Catalan bourgeoisie are the deflating of the Catalan "soufflé". But the pardons did not include the payment of the bill for the expenses of the "procés" and the representatives of the centralist Spanish bourgeoisie opposed to the "reconciliation" with the peripheral bourgeoisies use the means at their disposal (Court of Auditors, Supreme Court) to continue pressuring the government bloc and

Basque-Catalan nationalism: *"the refusal of the Spanish banks to guarantee the bonds requested by the Court of Auditors to some thirty senior officials for having allocated public money to internationalize the pro-independence movement between 2011 and 2017. In total, justice claims them 5.4 million euros, which they must pay today at the latest (...). "* (Expansión, 21-07-2021). With the arrest in Sardinia of the former president of the Generalitat of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, on September 23rd, this puppet also manages not to fall into oblivion when the cycle of the so-called "procés" is already concluding, at least for a while. At social level, the support has become almost testimonial since *"If in 2014 the demonstrations in favor of the rupture came to congregate 1.8 million people, according to the Generalitat, this year the march gathered 400,000 attendees, according to the organization, and 108,000 participants, according to the local police of Barcelona. "* (Expansión, 14-09-2021).

The fight of an important part of this sector of the small and medium bourgeoisie that attends these demonstrations is to avoid their imminent transition to the proletariat, to survive the slaughter of the middle classes in order to continue sucking the profits of others, on this occasion, from the pot of aid from European imperialism and in particular from Spanish imperialism where *"The Council of Ministers yesterday approved an extension of the coverage period of direct aid of 7,000 million (...) Thus, the self-employed and companies will be able to use the aid to satisfy debts and make payments to suppliers and other creditors, financial and non-financial, as well as to offset the fixed costs incurred, including accounting losses, provided that they have been generated within the established period and come from contracts prior to March 13, 2021 (...). "* (Expansión, 15-09-2021). The State at the service of the Employers and the State as the ideal collective capitalist, as Marx and Engels already stated in 1848 in the Manifesto of the Communist Party: *"The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."*

This is the evolution of the number of companies in Spain:



A very large part of this million or so companies will have to succumb to the crisis, in the process of capital concentration: *"Ninety-nine percent of Spanish companies do not even reach the definition of medium-sized (between 50 and 249 employees) and 82.81% have less than three people on staff. "* (El País, 17-10-2021).

Since the onset of the "health" crisis in March 2020, the Spanish government has been dedicated to provide abundant and cheap credit to companies: *"The line of public guarantees set up by the Official Credit Institute (ICO) to alleviate the crisis caused by the covid pandemic ended in 2020 providing 114,647 million euros of financing to Spanish companies. (...) The main beneficiaries of this aid have been the smallest companies and the self-employed".* (La Vanguardia, 13-01-2021). A report by BBVA Research estimates that *"The measures deployed in recent months to protect the productive fabric have prevented between 3,000 and 15,000 more companies from entering bankruptcy proceedings."* (La Vanguardia, 16-04-2021). One of the star measures, due to the advantages offered to companies, has been the ERTEs (furloughs). These proceedings are the ideal framework to be able to do and undo as the company pleases. To begin with, many of the ERTEs that have been filed since March were in violation of the law. The companies, both public and private, have rushed to violate any regulation in this respect because they know that the probability of being discovered and fined by the Labor Inspection is very low. To give an estimated figure: *"The Labor Inspection has detected that there are 20,000 companies in which the temporary employment regulation file (ERTE) could be being used fraudulently. "* (La Vanguardia, 02-07-2021). This, translated into reality, means that the number is much higher. The companies that have made layoffs, even if they were not allowed, do not have much to fear either, bourgeois justice is on their side: *"The Superior Court of Catalonia endorses an ERE* [layoff] *of 1,000 people by Covid despite the ban."* (Expansión, 25-02-2021), as well as the Labor and Social Security Inspection, which *"considers that the "loss of the totality of the exonerations of social contributions [for all the workers covered by an ERTE] in the event of the dismissal of one of the affected employees would be an excessively burdensome consequence for the company in view of the breach of the safeguarding of employment."* Inspection has informed the General Labor Directorate that *"(...) the Inspection is not authorized to demand from the company the totality of the amount that the defaulting company may have deducted from the social contributions."* (Expansión, 20-01-2021). After a few months of pause, the Redundancy Plans (collective layoffs, known as ERE) were reactivated and layoffs began. In Catalonia alone: *"According to data from the Generalitat, between January and February a total of 4,500 people dismissed through an ERE were counted. (...) is equivalent to the sum of all those dismissed in the years 2017 and 2018."* (La Vanguardia, 17-03-2021). And companies can rest easy as long as they have union services companies in their offices signing whatever is put in front of them: *"El Corte Inglés and the unions have resolved by fast track the first ERE in the history of the company. (...) adjustment plan that will affect 3,292 workers."* (El País, 24-03-2021). The union services company UGT is leading the rest of the Employers and in June presented a redundancy plan in Catalonia to lay off 45 of its employees.

What does it mean for the working class to be in a temporary employment regulation file (ERTE, i.e., in a furlough)? *"The specific number of workers who, despite being in an ERTE, are not receiving unemployment benefits, is one of the great unknowns of this crisis. (...) the cause of the incidents is in the origin of the file, which are the spreadsheets that the companies send to process the ERTE. "All the errors are confusions on the part of the companies: misplaced ID cards, incorrect account numbers, missing data... "* (El País, 01-07-2020). *"Despite the fact that in recent months there has been an improvement in the processing, the data from March to October still shows that 68,000 people have not received ERTE benefits in Catalonia. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Labor, between March and October 1.3 million people received an employment benefit, 809,424 of them as ERTE. (...) in the province of Barcelona, where the number of files is very high, it has taken up to four months to collect unemployment benefits".* (El País, 14-12-2020). It means NOT GETTING PAID for months, getting paid wrong and late and not being able to claim because the unemployment offices have been closed and not answering the phones, working overtime, even though it is not allowed, carrying more workload because the employer does not disengage the entire workforce.... There is a very high number of working-class families who cannot pay their bills and who have serious problems to do the shopping, to assume the expenses of

schooling, to buy medicines... This contrasts with what the bourgeois press has been publishing on the savings of Spanish families: *"Spanish household savings by 60,807 million euros in 2020, to exceed 108,800 million in the year as a whole (14.7% of gross disposable income), more than double that of 2019."* (Expansión, 21-05-2021). The families that have been able to save have been those of the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy, those who cannot find a place to invest. The working-class lives from day to day and has to pay debts due to unpaid rents, mortgages and bills. *"More than three million people were in 2020 in severe material deprivation, according to the National Institute of Statistics. The indicator measures how many of those surveyed cannot afford four items from a list of nine, which includes not being able to eat meat or fish at least every other day, having delays in housing-related payments, inability to meet unforeseen expenses or to keep the house at the right temperature. That's one million more than in 2019."* (Expansion, 18-08-2021). *"Since 2018, the number of people in severe poverty has increased by a whopping 50%, rising to six million. (...) there are already eleven million people in social exclusion in Spain, 2.5 million more than in 2018."* (La Vanguardia, 07-10-2021). And in the event that there had been some savings, what happens is that instead of being able to consume more products, the money ends up being spent on buying products of habitual use that are now more expensive. "*Last August the consumer price index (CPI) rose to 3.3%, its highest rate since October 2012.*" (Expansión, 15-09-2021). Fresh fruit and vegetables, oil and eggs have become more expensive, also "*fuels, with increases of 20.9% in gasoline and 18.5% in diesel. Not to mention the 32% increase in liquid fuels and the 20.8% increase in liquefied hydrocarbons, i.e., butane and propane. (…).*" (Expansión, 15-09-2021). These increases have repercussions on electricity bills *"in August soared by no less than 34.9% compared to a year ago (…)."* (Expansión, 15-09-2021). The result of not being able to repay the mortgage loan to the bank has been that *"The number of foreclosures entered (both habitual residence and other real estate), 20,460, is 17.5% higher than 2019, being the first year-on-year uptick since 2012."* (El País, 08-09-2021). This contrasts with the government's treatment of entrepreneurs in the law that is pending approval, with which *"Entrepreneurs may protect their primary residence and all their personal assets in bankruptcy proceedings*." (El País, 19-07-2021).

The State of the bosses is trying to protect its own class, given that the crisis is ruining and will ruin a whole series of businessmen and threatening them with being thrown into the ranks of the proletariat. An example will serve to illustrate the real content of organizations like the Platform of People Affected by the Mortgage (PAH) and how, all these semi-bankrupt petty-bourgeois elements dull the senses of the proletariat in their desperate attempt to resist proletarianization. The example is published by a bourgeois newspaper and is there for all to see and hear. It is about a construction businesswoman: *"created a company, built and sold around 50 villas and 200 houses in the western area of Madrid, the highest income area."* (El País, 09-10-2021). This businesswoman whose speculative and criminal business stopped working with the bursting of the mortgage bubble, has been evicted from her modest 540m^2 villa with a plot of 2.600m^2 and is now a member of the PAH, where they have no qualms in admitting that: *"In the past, this type of profile, with high incomes, was more common in the PAH. With the 2008 crisis came a lot of mortgaged people: middle class, businessmen and self-employed."* (El País, 08-10-2021). Hence the support and media hype that these organizations receive and the tremendous hindrance that they represent, adhering like leeches to the trunk of the proletariat to try to climb back on to the top from which they have fallen.

To all this must be added the recent publication of the draft General State Budget for 2022 (pending parliamentary approval), completely continuist, in which the supposedly left-wing government maintains the ceiling of taxation to employers that has existed for years: *"The main novelty is the establishment of a minimum corporate tax rate of 15%. This tax floor, however, will affect less than 1% of the companies, the largest ones, and, as it will be applied to the taxable base, it will have little impact on tax collection."* (El País, 07-10-2021).

The meager increases in the Interprofessional Minimum Wage (IMW) and the redoubling of workers' exploitation

In El Comunista no. 61 of December 2018 we published that: *"On July 5th, 2018, the Employers (CEOE-CEPYME) and the union services companies (CCOO-UGT) signed the so-called "IV agreement for employment and collective bargaining" with which a ceiling of 2% (plus a variable part of 1%) was placed on wage increases. This State agreement approved the increase of the Minimum Wage to 1.000€ per month in 2020, starting from 737€ in 2018, with the support of the Rajoy government (...)*

But the PSOE-Unidos Podemos government gives a propaganda coup and, by decree, raises the minimum wage to €900 from January 1st, 2019. Thus, they erase from memory the €1,000 increase agreed when Rajoy was in power. We must understand that the current government seeks not to have to raise the Minimum Wage in 2020 to €1,000, but to raise it by 2%, 3% or 4% (which would be increases of €18, €27 or €36 respectively) leaving it at €918, €927 or €936 instead of the €1,000 in January 2020. (...) we will wait to see what these great trapeze artists with nets and the background music of parliamentary cretinism will do in January 2020". In January 2020 the minimum wage was €900, in February 2020 it is retroactively raised to €950. September 2021: "*The Government and the trade unions closed last night an agreement to raise the minimum interprofessional wage (IMW) by 15 euros until December of this year. That is to say, this income would go from 950 to 965 euros per month. In relative terms, this represents an increase of 1.6%.*" (Expansión, 17-09-2021). **A 15 miserable euro increase.** And, in view of this announcement, SMEs have come out to warn and cry that this could destroy up to 130,000 jobs (Expansión, 15-09-2021). ¿Do they forget that "*Yesterday, the Council of Ministers approved an extension of the deadline for coverage of direct aid of 7,000 million for the self-employed and SMEs.*"? (Expansión, 15-09-2021). In the Spanish state there are about 4 million unemployed, of which 1 million are very long-term unemployed. *"One million people between 16 and 29 years of age are unemployed, 30% of its working population.*" (Expansión, 18-06-2021). For this mass of unemployed *"Labor Ministry proposes unemployment assistance of around 452 euros.*" (La Vanguardia, 10-05-2021).

The bourgeois press published in August 2021 a study on the "lost" working days, in millions, from 2015 and up to the second quarter of 2021. It can be seen that the bourgeoisie as a whole had been losing "*each quarter about 30 million working days due to illness, accident or temporary disability, according to the average of the five years prior to the coronavirus" and that this figure "began to increase in the first quarter of 2020, soaring in the second quarter, and grew strongly again at the beginning of this year to 54.5 million working days lost due to illness.*" (Expansión, 19-08-2021).

Here we have to see that the capitalist system itself is in charge, by the mere wear and tear of daily exploitation, of causing the loss of 30 million working days and that then the rise is not so great. The increase of lost working days, mainly those derived from Covid-19 due to real sick leave and preventive confinements, is a fact and hinders the progress and profitability of the enterprises: *"(…) The most devastating fact is that for each worker infected by coronavirus, Spanish companies have had to take an average of 55.4 days of sick leave, far in excess of the development of the disease. This is due to the fact that, in addition to sick leave due to illness, there have been numerous absences due to isolation of close contacts of those infected."* (Expansión, 19-08-2021). If we compare the 54.5 million days lost due to illness, accident or temporary disability with the 210,000 days lost due to strike since 2020 we see that the strike has had very little impact. This figure is an objective demonstration of the current disorganization and weakness of the working class. In a period in which in the Spanish state *"(…) there were more than 3.6 million workers in ERTE at the same time (...). In fact, at the end of July there were still 331,486 workers in this situation, of which more than 70% have their contracts totally suspended. In addition, 1.2 million workers lost their jobs in the second quarter of last year."* (Expansión, 19-08-2021). Labor killings, however, continued to increase: *"Despite an unprecedented slump in economic activity due to measures to combat the pandemic, a total of 708 workers lost their lives in work-related accidents in 2020 (...) This figure, still provisional, represents 13 deaths more than the previous year (+1.9%)."* (La Vanguardia, 13-02-2021).

To recover class unionism, to introduce the communist program in the immediate struggle

The explanation for the lack of proletarian response is to be found in the total and absolute control exercised over the working class by the subsidized trade unionism and the false left that deceive and subject the working class to their interests.

As the crisis progresses, these trade union service companies will have to act as an escape valve, they will have to provide an outlet for certain situations in order to control them and prevent them from getting out of control, it is their job and that is why they are paid by the State and the Employers. Gradually we will see how they will increase their activity by calling strikes, demonstrations and rallies and with a greater staging and change in the language they have been using. Recently we have seen how Matías Carnero (president of the SEAT works council and of the UGT of Catalonia) was appointed member of the Volkswagen Supervisory Board saying that *"(…) This is a good moment to reinforce the role of the class unions, I say this very clearly, not unions that come out of nowhere, for party interests or whatever. When I speak of class unions, I am talking about the UGT and CCOO and all together we have an important role in society."* (El Diari del Treball, 30-03-2021).

It is fundamental for the bourgeoisie the effective imprisonment of the organs of immediate struggle within the business networks and the bourgeois State, maintaining the mirage or the screen that they continue to be "class unions" when they are in reality **union service companies**. For those who have not seen it clearly yet, the XII Congress of CCOO has just been held, with the invitation and stellar participation of... Antonio Garamendi, president of the CEOE! The so-called class union invites nothing more and nothing less than the spokesman of the Spanish bourgeoisie... and what was his intervention? *"for us, you are not the bogeymen* [it's a pun with the acronym of CCOO, also called "cocos", bogeymen], *you are the Comisiones Obreras (...) Thank you very much, good luck. Congratulations Unai* [Unai Sordo, re-elected secretary general of CCOO in this congress], *I would also like to greet Mari Cruz, the teams, Carlos, so many people around here who usually sit at the tables and simply, and encourage you, I insist that this fluid dialogue is what is going to make us move forward. Besides, I see that progress is being made because even before I have seen Agustín who has already put on his collar shirt, I believe that this is moving forward little by little and we are reaching an agreement".* The Ministers of Labor and Economy also attended as guests.

In addition to the control exercised by these criminals, the Employers have taken advantage of the stoppage of total and partial lockouts to attack the organized workforces or to repress the workforces that have gone on strike.

During this period, some of the companies in which strikes could have been called were in a half-closed or totally closed situation. In this situation of stoppage, the strength of the strike was greatly reduced.

Despite all these difficulties, there have been a few strikes with a class-based approach organized by the small class-based union, Solidarity and Union of the Workers (SUT), which broke with this control and managed to protest publicly. The first of the strikes called during this period was at a municipal sports center where the workers had not been paid their salaries or benefits for three months. In August a strike began at La Pedrera in Barcelona, at the end of September a strike was called at Sagrada Familia and shortly afterwards, at the beginning of October, a strike was called at Casa Batlló. The last strike called by this union was that of the MUEC in May 2021. A situation is reproduced in which the strikes that are initiated spread geographically or sequentially, thus showing that groups of the working class feel pushed to struggle, but the very situation of the half stoppage of the Employers in certain sectors takes away the strength of these struggles and gives the Employers room for maneuver to use the tool of the lockout.

Being aware of these limitations, it is undeniable that in the present situation of crushing social control it is very important that groups of workers break this control, demonstrate publicly and project from these struggles a class position in the street, openly rejecting any solidarity with the company itself and attacking it even when it is doing badly economically, surpassing or tending to surpass the limits of the companies and sectors. For this reason, the militants and sympathizers of the Party must encourage the serious preparation and carrying out of these struggles. This must be done without ever carrying out actions merely scenic or doomed to failure, always taking into account the whole of the forces seeking not to exhaust them and that the experiences lived by the groups of workers in struggle be as deep as possible in the political sense.

"The task of the party during unfavorable periods when the proletariat is reduced to passivity is to foresee the forms and ***encourage the emergence of organizations for carrying out the immediate struggle for economic defense****. In the future such organizations may assume entirely new aspects, possibly different from the already well-known type of trade unions, industrial unions, factory councils and so on. The party always encourages forms of organizations that facilitate contact and common action between workers from different localities and different occupations, while it rejects closed forms."* (Characteristic Theses of the Party, 1951).

The rulings of the bourgeois courts are more and more blatantly favorable to the Employers and directly aimed at hindering the development of class organization. The Labor Inspection has tangibly changed its action towards these strikes

with classist approaches, refusing to act, validating company actions which, according to bourgeois legality and the Labor Inspection's own previous action, would be illegal, and reducing the fines to a tenth of those it imposed previously. We must welcome this process of progressive unmasking of bourgeois institutions and the experiences that groups of workers in struggle can draw from the direct perception of the real function of these institutions is very important.

In today's amorphous environment, every small or medium-sized struggle is a great opportunity for some individuals in the group of workers to have the ingredients to break with their ideology of origin and also for the group as a whole to keep a memory or a reference to contact us again in future situations or struggles. This is only possible if the experience (even if it is a defeat) is fruitful, if the development that the events will follow has been anticipated, if the true character of all the agents of the bourgeoisie interacting with the strike or struggle in progress (parliamentarians, subsidized unions, platforms, labor inspection, mediators, court, media, etc.) has been anticipated, and if quality is given priority over quantity (better less, but better).

This work is developed taking into account Marx's warning in "Wages, Price and Profit" and the perspective of trade union intervention outlined in the theses of the Party: it must not involve such an absorption that it prevents the development of political work and must serve above all to introduce the slogan of the abolition of wage labor and the Marxist approach within the working class, it must be an integral part of our activity without attributing to it the character of an end in itself, acquiring and helping to acquire through it the experiences and trainings for the useful and effective revolutionary preparation.

"(…) the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. ***They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights*** *incessantly springing up from the never ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market.*

They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto: "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" ***they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: "Abolition of the wages system!"***" (Wages, Price and Profit, K. Marx, 1865).

"The work of propagating its ideology and proselytizing for its ranks which the party continuously carries on is thus ***inseparable from the reality of the proletariat's activity and movement in all its myriad forms****. It is a banal error to see as contradictory: participation in struggles for contingent and limited objectives, and the preparation of the final and general revolutionary struggle. The very existence of the party's unitary organism, with its indispensable conditions of clarity of programmatic vision and solidity of organizational discipline, gives a guarantee that partial demands will never be accorded the value of ends in themselves, and that the struggle to fulfil them will only be seen as* ***a means of experience and training for useful and effective revolutionary preparation****."* (Theses of Rome, 1922).

Faced with the disfigurement and systematic falsification of Marxism by the bourgeoisie and its satellite organizations, it is fundamental that, in the atmosphere of immediate struggle, during the strike, readings of classic texts of Marxism are introduced and carried out: "Wage Labour and Capital", of the "Manifesto of the Communist Party", of "Wages, Price and Profit", etc. The experience lived in these strikes or the experiences transmitted in the workers' assemblies, in the class union, provide extremely useful material for the understanding of Marxism and the denunciation of its falsifications. It is important to remind that *"the world of opinions alone […] in the eyes of Marxists is a false world as long as it is not treated as a superstructure of the world of economic conflicts"* (Theses of Naples, 1965). The confidence gained in the world of material class conflict through our actions in the preparation, organization and maintenance of struggles serves to be able to make an organized and focused study to understand the text to the maximum instead of being a madhouse or a highbrow debate between coffee charlatans.

As communists we must denounce and oppose all the attacks described above and those to come, prepare and organize groups of workers to assume the approach of the struggle for the maintenance and improvement of working and living conditions, organizing and consolidating the class union, rejecting subsidies and to be fully released from work (liberado sindical) as well as any support (which will always be poisoned) of parliamentary cretinism, denouncing the repressive, exploitative and reactionary character of all governments and especially of the so-called "left" ones (like the one currently at the head of the Spanish government), permanent defenders of a rotten and outdated system that we must destroy and bury together with its defenders.

THE RISE AND FALL OF BOURGEOISE CIVILIZATION (LXXXIII)

From "Battaglia Comunista" no 23, December 5-19, 1951

The floods in the Po valley and the confused debate on their causes and on the responsibility of bodies and entities that have not known how to carry out the defense, with all the nauseating mutual reproach of "speculations" on the misfortune, call into question one of the most widespread false opinions common to all the contenders: the contemporary capitalist society, with the correlative development of science, technology and production, puts the human species in the best conditions to fight against the difficulties of the natural environment. Hence the contingent *guilt* of the government and of party A and B in not knowing how to exploit this magnificent potential at their disposal, in the mistaken and guilty administrative and political measures. Hence the no less classic: you get out of there, I want to get in.

While it is true that the industrial and economic potential of the capitalist world is increasing rather than decreasing, it is equally true that the greater its virulence, the worse are the living conditions of the human masses in the face of natural and historical cataclysms. Unlike the periodic rise of rivers, the rise of the frenetic accumulation of capitalism does not have as its perspective the "decrease" of a *descending curve* of the hydrometer readings, but the catastrophe of rupture.

YESTERDAY

Close is the relationship between the millenary development of man's working technique and his relationship with the natural environment. The primitive man, like the animal, gathers and consumes the spontaneous fruits by means of a simple prehensile operation and, like the animal, flees without control before the explosion of a natural phenomenon that threatens his life. Just as the artificial production of products for consumption and the accumulation of stocks of these same products and utensils obliges him to establish himself, so it obliges him to defend himself against the threats of meteors and natural upheavals. Such a defense, which is no different from that against other groups competing for the best seat, or against the predators of the accumulated stock, can only be collective. From these collective demands, as we have so often seen, comes class division and exploitation by the dominators.

In Marx (Capital, Section V), *"This mode* [capitalism] *is based on the dominion of man over nature"*. This also implies the war of nature against man. An excessively generous and prodigal nature would not be a favorable environment for the rise of capitalism: *"It is not the mere fertility of the soil, but the differentiation of the soil, the variety of its natural products, the changes of the seasons, which form the physical basis for the social division of labour (...). It is the necessity of bringing a natural force under the control of society, of economising, of appropriating or subduing it on a large scale by the work of man's hand, that first plays the decisive part in the history of industry. Examples are, the irrigation works in Egypt, Lombardy, Holland, or in India and Persia where irrigation by means of artificial canals, not only supplies the soil with the water indispensable to it, but also carries down to it, in the shape of sediment from the hills, mineral fertilisers. The secret of the flourishing state of industry in Spain and Sicily under the dominion of the Arabs lay in their irrigation works. One of the material bases of the power of the state over the small disconnected producing organisms in India, was the regulation of the water supply. The Mahometan rulers of India understood this better than their English successors. It is enough to recall to mind the famine of 1866, which cost the lives of more than a million Hindus in the district of Orissa, in the Bengal presidency."* It is well known that the overkill of similar shortages is very recent, despite the immense world capitalist potential... The struggle against nature generates *industry*, and man lives on two sacred Dantesque elements: *nature and art* (the third is God). Capitalism generates the exploitation of man with industry. The bourgeois will not abhor violence against God, nature and art.

The high modern *late capitalism* marks serious points of retreat in the struggle of defense against the aggressions of the natural forces to the human species, and the reasons are strictly social and class, to the point of reversing the advantage deriving from the progress of theoretical and applied science. We hope even to accuse it of having exasperated with atomic explosions the intensity of meteoric rains, or tomorrow, of "mocking" nature to the point of risking to make the earth and its atmosphere uninhabitable, and perhaps, to burst its very skeleton for having triggered "chain reactions" in the nuclear complexes of all the elements. For the time being, we establish an economic and social law of parallelism between their greater efficiency in exploiting the work and life of men, and the less and less rational defense against the natural environment, understood in its broadest sense.

The earth's crust is modified by geological processes that man learns to understand better and better, and to attribute less and less to the mysterious wills of resentful powers, and that within certain limits he learns to correct and control. When, in prehistoric times, the Po valley was an immense lagoon in which the Adriatic wet the feet of the Alps, the first inhabitants, who evidently did not have the good fortune to be able to lament the interested charity of America and the "amphibious means", occupied dwellings built on stilt houses rising out of the water. It was the civilization of the "Terramare", of which Venice is a distant development, it was all too easy to base "reconstruction business" and timber supply contracts on it! With the rising of the water the dwelling on stilts did not collapse: modern houses with walls collapse: and yet, what means would be available today to build houses, roads and hanging railroads! These would be enough to guarantee the integrity of the population. Utopia! The economic calculations do not add up, but it does add up to two hundred billion in repair and reconstruction works.

In historical times, the first dikes on the Po date back to no less than the Etruscans. For centuries and centuries, the natural process of degradation of the mountain slopes and the transport in alluvium of the materials suspended in the flowing waters had formed the immense and fertile plains, and it was necessary to ensure the permanence of the agricultural populations there. The successive populations and regimes continued to raise high dikes on the sides of the great river, but this was not enough to prevent the immense cataclysms with which it changed its course. And since the 5th century that the leap from the bed of the Po, near Guastalla takes a new route, which was then that of the last stretch of the Oglio, left tributary. In the thirteenth century, in the stretch towards the mouth, the great river leaves the southern branch of the vast delta, the current secondary "Po of Volano", and takes the current bed of Pontelagoscuro to the sea. These terrifying "leaps" always occur from south to north. A general law wants to attribute to all the rivers of the planet this tendency to move towards the pole, for geophysical reasons. But for the Po, the law is evident, due to the very different nature of the left and

right tributaries. The former come from the Alps and are clear water courses, as they stop in the great lakes, and because their maximum floods do not correspond to torrential rains, but to the spring melting of the glaciers. Therefore, these tributaries, in principle, do not contribute turbidity and sand deposits to the main river bed. Instead, from the south, from the Apennines, the short, torrential tributaries from the right, with huge differences between flood and drought inflow, spill the debris of mountain erosion and bury them in the right side of the Po bed, which from time to time escapes the obstacle and flows further north. One does not need chauvinism to know that from this problem was born the fluvial hydraulic science, which for centuries has raised the problem of the usefulness and function of dikes, and relates it to that of the distribution of irrigation water in canals, and then to river navigation. After the Roman works, we have news of the first canals in the Po valley since 1037. After the victory of Legnano, the Milanese brought the Grand Canal (Naviglio Grande) as far as Abbiategrasso, which became navigable in 1271. Thus arose capitalist agriculture, the first in Europe, and the great hydraulic works were carried out by the state powers: from the lock canals studied by the genius of Leonardo, who also dictated rules for the fluvial regime, to the Cavour canal begun in 1860.

The construction of dikes to contain the rivers posed a major problem: that of the overhanging rivers. While alpine rivers, such as the Ticino and the Adda, are for most of their course embedded between natural banks, the tributaries of the right and the Po starting from Cremona are hanging. This means that not only the water level, but also the riverbed, is higher than the surrounding fields. Dikes prevent these from being submerged, and a drainage channel running parallel to the river collects the local waters and returns them downstream to the river itself: these are the great hydrological land improvements; and as they approach the sea the transfer is done by mechanical means, until they maintain dry alluvial plains that are at a lower elevation not only than the river but also than the sea itself. The entire Polesine is an immense low-lying area: Adria is 4 meters above sea level; Rovigo is 5; at its height the bed of the Po is higher, and that of the Adige even higher. It is obvious that a breakage of the dikes would turn the entire province of Rovigo into a huge lake.

One of the great debates among river hydraulic engineers is whether the rise of the bed of such rivers is progressive. This was stated by French hydraulic engineers a century ago, with the opposition of the masters of Italian hydraulics, and it is still debated at congresses today.

It cannot be denied, however, that the turbidity of the river, with its deposition, pushes away the mouth, extending it towards the sea, even if it does not stop in the last stretches of the riverbed. As a result of such an incessant process, the slope of the river bed and the water surface cannot but decrease, and by hydraulic law the speed of the current at equal flow capacity: therefore, the need to raise the dikes appears historically indefinite and inexorable, and progressive, also the disastrous nature of the eventual ruptures.

In this field, the availability of modern mechanical means has contributed to the diffusion of the method of exploitation of large tracts of very fertile land, maintaining it by continuous dry drainage. The risk of occupants and workers relatively worrying to an economy of profit, and the damage of the possible destruction of works is counterbalanced, on the one hand, by the fertilization that follows the silt invasions, and on the other hand, by the economic factor: making works is always a capitalist *business*.

In modern times, the classic *filling* reclamations were extended along the entire Italian coastline in the lowlands: alternatively, the waters of the rivers were allowed to overflow into large storage basins whose level rose slowly, with the double advantage of not letting the useful and fertile land flow into the sea, and of protecting larger and larger areas from floods and future diseases. Such a rational system proved too slow for the demands of capital investment. Another tendentious argument was and is that drawn from the ever-increasing population density, which does not permit the loss of useful soil. Thus, almost all the old hydrological land improvements studied with patient and exact leveling by the hydraulic engineers of the Austrian, Tuscan, Bourbon, etc. regimes were destroyed.

It is clear that in having to decide today between the various radical solutions to the problems, not only is capitalism's inability to look at the long term influenced by the transmission of facilities from generation to generation, but there are also strong local interests of agricultural producers and industrialists who have an interest in not affecting certain areas, and leverage on the attachment of the miserable populations to their inhospitable places. Solutions to create "diversions" from the Po have long been advocated. A study of this type is always very difficult because of the uncertainty of the results with respect to the forecasts, which is a great nuisance in the business climate. One solution, to the right, consists of a cut from Pontelagoscuro to the valleys or lagoons of Comacchio: the corresponding artificial channel would reduce by about one third the length of the current channel to the sea. Such a solution clashes with the large investments in the hydrological improvements of Ferrarese lands and the fish farming industry, and would meet with resistance. However, there would be no less resistance to solutions with a longer vision, and perhaps more in line with the natural process, towards the union of the courses of the Po and the Adige, between which the lower Polesana develops, creating in the valley of the latter, today crossed by a network of small watercourses, a large collector, and perhaps in the future a diversion of one of the two rivers, if not both.

In the bourgeois era, such a study would not lead to positive research, but to two "policies", *right* and *left*, with respect to the Po, with the corresponding conflict of speculation groups.

TODAY

It is debated whether the current catastrophe, in which some already see the natural formation of a large stable marsh, and the displacement of the bed of the Po with the total dismemberment of the north dike, derives from an exceptional densification of rainfall and other participation of natural causes, or from the negligence and fault of men and administrators. It is indisputable that the succession of wars and crises has led to the neglect for decades of the difficult services of technical supervision and maintenance of the dikes, of dredging of the channels, when necessary, as well as the arrangement of the high mountain basins, whose deforestation causes a greater and faster collection of rainwater in floods and a greater influx of suspended material in the lower courses.

With today's trend in science and official technical organization, it is also difficult to collect and compare udometric (amount of rainfall in several days in the basin that feeds the river) and hydrometric (water heights in the hydrometers, maximum flow of the watercourse) data with those of the past. Today, respected offices and scientists issue their verdicts according to political requirements and the reason of State, i.e., according to the effect they will have, and the figures are subject to all kinds of trainings. On the other hand, one can perfectly believe what the

current of criticism says, that the observation stations destroyed by the war have not even been reconstructed; and one can also believe that our present technical bureaucracy works on old maps that are passed from copy to copy; and they crawl on the tables of dependent and listless technical personnel; and it does not update the surveys and the difficult levelings and geodetic operations of precision that allow to connect the various data of the phenomenon: this one lives in all areas of maps that respond to the paraphernalia of the leaflet in format and colors, but that have nothing to do with the physical reality. The figures given here and there in the general press cannot be followed: it is easy to blame journalists who know everything and know nothing. Therefore, it remains to be seen - and the movements with large means and large bases could well try - whether the intensity of the rains was really greater than that of a century of observations: it is legitimate to doubt it. The same is true of the hydrometric readings of the maximum water level reached and of the maximum flow: it is easy to say that the historically known maximum at Pontelagoscuro, of 11 thousand cubic meters per second, has risen to 13 thousand in the last few days. In 1917 and 1926 there were very high floods, also in spring, with incomparably lesser consequences, and in Piacenza they reached 13,800 meters per second.

Without going on too long, let us assume that the rains were not of an intensity never seen before, and that the disaster was determined mainly by the long lack of necessary services and the omission of maintenance and improvement works, in relation to the smaller sums that the public administration allocated for these purposes and the way they were used, compared to the past.

It is a matter of giving these facts a cause, which must be and is social and historical, and which it is puerile to trace back to "false maneuvers" of those who were or are today at the levers of the Italian state machine. Moreover, this is not an exclusively Italian phenomenon, but of all countries: administrative disorder, theft and business perversions in the decisions of the public machine have now been denounced by conservatives themselves, and in America they have also been linked to public disasters: even there, very modern cities in Kansas and Missouri have been incredibly battered by poorly regulated rivers.

There are two misconceptions underlying the criticism we have highlighted: one is that the struggle to return from the fascist dictatorship *within* the bourgeoisie (the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie has always been there since it won its *freedom*) to the outside multi-party democracy was aimed at better administration; whereas it was clear that it should lead and has led to worse administration. And this is the common fault of ALL the colors of the great bloc of the national liberation committees. The other erroneous idea is that of believing that the totalitarian form of the capitalist regime (of which Italian fascism was the first great test) has as its content an excessive power of the state bureaucracy as opposed to the autonomous initiatives of entrepreneurship and private speculation. This form is, instead, at a certain stage, a condition for the survival of capitalism and of the power of the bourgeois class, which concentrates in the State machine anti-revolutionary forces, but makes the administrative machine weaker and more manipulable by speculative interests.

Here it is necessary to take a look at the history of the machinery of the Italian administration since the time of national unity. At first it worked well and had strong powers. All the favorable circumstances were present. The young bourgeoisie, in order to come to power and sustain its interests, had to go through a heroic phase and face sacrifices, so individual elements were still willing to lavish themselves, being less attracted by immediate profit not ostensible in the sunlight. Additional compact enthusiasm was needed to liquidate the resistance of the old powers and the rusty state machines of the various parts into which the country was previously divided politically. There was no perceptible division in parties, the single party of the liberal revolution (virgin at the time of 1860, prostituted in 1943) ruled, with the evident acquiescence of the few republicans themselves, and without the workers' movement having yet arisen. The wheeling and dealing had to begin with the bipartisan *transformism* of 1876. The skeleton of the bureaucracy coming from Piedmont, in essence behind the military occupation forces, enjoyed a real dictatorship over the local elements, and autocratic or clerical opponents were in practice under the weight of exceptional laws... since they were guilty of illiberalism. Under these conditions, a young, conscientious and honest administrative machine was built.

As the capitalist system developed in depth and breadth, the bureaucracy suffered a double assault on its uncorrupted hegemony. In the economic sphere, the big businessmen of the public works and state-assisted production sectors raised their heads. At the same time, in the political sphere, the spread of corruption in parliamentary practice meant that every day the "representatives of the people" intervened to influence the decisions of the executive and general administrative machinery, which until then had functioned with strict impersonality and impartiality.

Public works, which used to be studied by the best experts, naively happy to have their bread and butter as government officials, and completely independent in their judgments and opinions, begin to be imposed by the executors: these are the classic "monkey business" that begin to circulate. The state spending machine becomes less useful to the community the more costly it is.

This process was important during the Giolittian period, however, the situation of improving economic prosperity made the damage less evident. This system, and herein lies the political masterpiece, slowly entangles the emerging workers' party. Precisely because in Italy labor abounds and capital is scarce, the State is invoked everywhere as an employer, and the deputy who wants the votes of the industrial or agricultural constituency climbs the stairs of the ministries in the hunt for the panacea: public works!

After the first great war, although it was "won", the Italian bourgeoisie saw all the rosy conditions of the heroic times changed too much, and fascism was born. The concentration of the police force of the State, together with the concentration of the control of almost all sectors of the economy, allows at the same time to avoid the outbreak of radical movements of the masses and to assure to the wealthy class free speculative maneuvers, on condition that it equips itself with a single class center, which frames its government policy. All the medium and small businessmen are forced to make the reformist concessions invoked in the long struggle by the workers' organizations, which (as always) are destroyed by stealing their program; with all this, while favoring the high capitalist concentration, the internal situation is pacified. The totalitarian form allows capital to put into practice the reformist deception of the previous decades, going towards the class collaboration foreseen by the traitors of the revolutionary party.

The maneuvering of the state machine and the same overflowing special legislation are put at the shameless service of entrepreneurial initiatives. From a technical law - to return to our original subject, which dealt with rivers - which had had some real

masterpieces around 1865, it became a veritable cesspool of nonsense open to all maneuvers, and the civil servant was reduced to a puppet of big business. The hydrological services are precisely among those which kick against the ideal of the famous *private initiative*. They demand a unitary system and full power: they had very relevant traditions. Jacini wrote in 1857*: the civil reasoning of water found in Giandomenico Romagnosi an immortal treatise writer*. In short, bourgeois administration and technique had class objectives even then, but they were a serious matter: today they are a trifle.

From this derives the tendency that has led to the degeneration, rather than progress, of the hydraulic defense system in the Padano Valley: from a process that does not concern a single party or a single nation, but the secular vicissitudes of a class regime.

To put it simply, if once the bureaucracy - independent, if not omnipotent - studied its projects on the drawing board and then called for bids from the public procurement "companies" and, denying them even cups of coffee, forced them to carry out their work rigorously, so that in principle the choice of works to which funds were allocated was made according to general criteria; today the relationship is reversed. Weak and servile, the technical bureaucracy receives the projects drawn up by the companies themselves and passes them on without hardly looking at them, and the companies obviously choose those works that offer benefits, and leave aside the delicate works that imply a serious commitment and less repeatable expense.

It is not that the moral fact underlies all this, nor that as a rule the civil servant succumbs to the corruption of high gratuities. It is that, if a civil servant resists, not only does his work become ten times heavier, but the interests with which he clashes mobilize against him decisive partisan influences in the high circles of the ministries on which he depends. In the past, it was the most skilled technician who made progress, today it is the one who is best able to move within this network.

When the Fascist one-party system gave way to a multi-party system unknown to Giolittian Italy itself, to an England model of constitutionalism, and so on (since we have never had ten declared parties willing to govern in the constitution, but at most two or three) the evil worsened. The allied armies were to bring back the experts and the honest! What a foolish expectation that of so many and so many: the new change of guard has given the worst of the *guards*, as in the Padanian dikes.

It is very symptomatic for the diagnosis of the present phase of the capitalist regime that a high official of the Superior Council of Public Works has let himself go and said that the flood guards have deserted at the right time: the only purpose for which they are permanently paid; this is the style of modern bureaucracy (for some the supposed new ruling class! The ruling classes arrive with open jaws, but not with trembling hearts).

No less interesting is what Alberto de Stefani wrote under the title: *The government of the Po*. After giving a little history of the provisions relating to the past, he quotes the opinion of writers of technical journals: "The need to react to the system of concentration of the activity of the offices exclusively or almost exclusively in the design and execution of large works cannot be sufficiently insisted upon". This De Stefani did not see the radical scope of such criticism, he deplored the neglect of the conservation and maintenance of existing works and the drawing of plans for new ones; he quoted from other passages: "Tens of billions are being spent as a result of the floods (and tomorrow hundreds) after systematically skimping and denying the few funds for maintenance works and even for the closure of the breaks". This seems to have happened for the Rhine. An economist of De Stefani's caliber gets by with, "We all lack the spirit of *conservation* due to the abundance of uncontrolled *fantasy*."

Is it a question of national psychology? No longer; it is the result of the modern type of capitalist production. Capital is now incapable of the social function of transmitting the work of the present generation to future generations and using the work of past generations for this purpose. It does not want maintenance contracts, but gigantic construction projects: to make them possible, natural cataclysms not being sufficient, capital creates, by inescapable necessity, human ones, and makes post-war reconstruction "*the business of the century*".

These concepts must be applied to the criticism of the low and demagogic position of the so-called Italian workers' parties. Give to speculation and to the capitalist enterprise of investment in waterworks the capitals of the armament orders, and the latter (except to put the pseudo-reds in the metallurgical centers in crisis, if the thing were really done) will use them in the same style; muddling and speculating a thousandfold, and raising the glass for the coming, if not of the next war, of the next flood.

The immense river of human history also has its irresistible and threatening floods. When the wave rises, it roars against the two dikes that constrict it: on the right is the conformist dike, the dike of the preservation of existing and traditional forms; and along it, the priests chant in procession, the police and gendarmes patrol, the teachers and storytellers chatter about official lies and class scholasticism.

The leftist dike is the reformist one, and in it crowd the "popular", the artisans of opportunism, the parliamentarians and the progressive organizers; exchanging insults across the stream, both courts claim to have the recipe for the mighty river to follow its bridled and forced path.

But in the great bends the current breaks every brake, comes out of its bed and "jumps", as the Po jumped at Guastalla and Volano, in an unexpected direction, sweeping over the two sordid bands in the unstoppable wave of the subversive revolution of every ancient form of dike, molding society like the earth with a new face.