

**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST  
BULLETIN**

**Organ of the Fraction of the International Left Communist**

**n° 8**

**April 2012**

**To contact us :**

e-mail Adress : **inter1925@yahoo.fr ;**

See our web site :

**<http://fractioncommuniste.org>**

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(The texts translated and available in English are in bold. The others aren't translated into English.

*Warning* : the translations into English we do, are made by comrades whose knowledge of this language is very relative.

Thus, besides the lack of easiness for the reading, our English texts may present some mistakes and confusions which aren't political but "technical". One can refer to the French and Spanish versions.

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**Presentation of the *International Communist Bulletin* n°8**

This bulletin is focused on two questions : on the development of the classes struggle and the evolution of the relation of forces between them for one part ; and on the defence of the proletarian character of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia on the other part. The development of the workers struggles and the inevitable perspective of massive confrontations between the classes are at the core of the present historical situation. The outcome of these confrontations will determine the future of Humanity. No more, no less. In these fights, the proletariat won't be victorious and won't clear the path for Revolution and Communism unless the communist groups and organizations, as weak and isolated as they are today, place themselves resolutely in the first line of the class war, at its vanguard ; and unless they succeed to organize and regroup in order to set up a true party of the proletariat. They won't be able to do so unless they'll be armed with their militant conviction and their class consciousness.

Arming conviction and class consciousness needs the affirmation of the historical thread which goes all along the generations of revolutionaries and political organizations of the proletariat. It begun with the Communist League, the 1<sup>st</sup> International, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Left Fractions coming from the latter, particularly the one called "Italian Left". It goes too through the historical thread of the experience of our class, the revolutionary proletariat. The Paris Commune of course. But above all the Russian Revolution, the experience of the victorious workers insurrection and the exercise of the Dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our class enemies are not mistaken on this. They don't stop distorting the history of the workers movement and especially this Russian experience whose memory and lessons remain up until today the main weapons for fighting capitalism, for bringing it down, for destroying it and for setting up communism. Our class enemies are not mistaken on this and make all they can in order to break this historical thread. It is also at this level that the classes confrontation takes place.

Distorting the reality of the workers councils ? Of the Bolshevik Party and of the International Communist ? Why ? For what stake ? In order to erase, to remove from the workers memories, the consciousness of the political dimension of the classes struggle. The consciousness of the primacy of the political dimension in the proletariat's struggle, it means the primacy of the political confrontation with the bourgeoisie's forces, with its State apparatus. The issue today ? Erasing from the consciousness the path which drives from the fight for the leadership and the organization of the present daily struggles (against all the forces of the bourgeois State, in particular the unions) to the frontal confrontation to the State, its destruction, up to the dictatorship of the workers councils won over to communism !

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012.

***More than ever and altogether,  
Let's follow the path that the proletariat in Greece shows us***

They were hundreds of thousands demonstrators who shouted their anger in the Greek streets on February 12th against the organized and planned misery. Actually, the working class in Greece and, behind it, the greatest part of the population refused stubbornly since 4 years to accept the various barbarous austerity plans which have succeeded one another. Today, far from reducing, the mobilization has not but carried on increasing, spreading and deepening. If, for this February 12th demonstrations, the international medias could not keep silent and ignore the workers revolt, they strove to travesty its reality – by focusing the attention on the fires at the Athena center<sup>1</sup> - in order to water down as much as possible the example for the workers populations of the other countries. As well, they completely passed in silence over the hundreds of thousands demonstrators who marched the same day in Portugal against the same attacks on their living and working conditions. A week later, the 19th, it was the turn of the Spanish great cities to be invaded by as much demonstrators against the austerity and misery measures that the bourgeoisie is setting up in all countries. If we add to this the various expressions of workers struggles more or less partial and local in all the European countries and on the other continents - China and USA for instance -, it is clear for everyone that the international proletariat which is under tremendous attacks on its living conditions, tend to develop a general response to capitalism in crisis.

Up to today - and since many months now -, the proletariat in Greece is at the vanguard of this international workers fight-back. Not only the anger, the fighting spirit and the extent of the workers resistance are examples to be followed by all<sup>2</sup>, but above all the workers in Greece tend increasingly to oppose directly to the State of the bourgeois class by trying to paralyze it. Besides the

occupations of city halls and other power places, the different attempts – one of them has been violently repressed by the Stalinist militia of the FAME union - to impede the access of the deputies to the Parliament in order that the austerity plans could not be voted, express the willingness and the need to oppose directly and by force to the bourgeois State power. **In direct link** with this political dynamic of class confrontation to the State, the autonomous organization of different particular struggles, but all participating to the general fight, - as in the Steel industry, in the hospitals, in the Education... - as well as the organization of collective distribution of foods taken in the hyper-markets, tend too to develop. In that sense, we carry on defending that *The Working Class in Greece Shows us the Way !*

If, at the present time, the workers were only confronting the Greek bourgeoisie alone, there is much chance that the strength of their movement would have obliged this one to withdraw, at least temporarily, the last economical attacks in order to spare not to weaken too much its State power. But the proletariat in Greece is confronting the international bourgeoisie, European at first. It is true at the economical level : it is enough to look at the pressures that the main European countries exert on the Greek bourgeoisie for the quick and brutal setting up of generalized austerity. It is even more true at the political level since the international ruling class can't ignore, nor let such a struggle as it now expresses and develops, becoming a major example for the proletarians of the whole world. Here it is why all is done to maintain isolated the working class in Greece and, as much as possible, to drive it quickly to a serious defeat. But by aiming at provoking this defeat, it is not only the Greek proletariat that the bourgeoisie wants to hit ; but the whole proletariat. The essential stake of the situation is not in Athens or Saloniki ; but in the hands of the international proletariat and especially the European one's.

Thus, we call the working class of the different European countries, already mobilized, not only to

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1 . We invite our readers to take knowledge the testimony published by the review *Controversies*, [\*In Greece the bourgeoisie declares WAR on the proletariat\*](#), about the reality of the February 12th demonstrations and about the dynamic of the workers struggle in course in the country.

2 . See our leaflet of last October [\*It's time to follow the path that the proletarian class shows us in Greece !\*](#)

follow the Greek example, to support it, but also to take it over by engaging firmly in the class fight. To impose a relation of forces more favorable for the working class in all countries, in order the different bourgeoisies begin to fear the generalized propagation of a fire of struggles which would challenge openly not only their economical policy made of misery and death but also their own class power, the workers can't not limit themselves to express their anger and their fighting spirit behind the unions and the Left political forces of capital. They must heave up their different fights at least at the level of their class brothers in Greece by opposing to the sabotages of those forces and fighting them for the lead and the organization of the struggle.

Because, it is well and truly all the "politicians" we must "throw out" as the demonstrators in Greece shout out ; it is well and truly all the bourgeois State apparatus we must paralyze as the workers in Greece try to do ; it is well and truly in the massive struggle and its organization from the workplaces that the fight must be led and developed; it is well and truly the only path which can clear the perspective of the destruction of the bourgeois State and of capitalism.

At an immediate level, it is the only mean to support and help the Greek workers and to enable them to engage with the strongest firmness, decision and conviction in the political path of class confrontation with the State. It is the only mean in order the struggles become internationalized and in order they oppose the international class front of the proletariat to the united front of the different national bourgeoisies.

Since make no mistake : the bourgeois class which has declared an open war to the workers of all countries, is well capable to want to make a bloody example with the "Greek case" for the whole international proletariat if we leave our class brothers isolated.

To the proletarians of all countries : join and take back the fight of our class brothers in Greece against your own bourgeoisie !

To the proletarians in Greece : your struggle against the bourgeoisie goes through the reinforcement of all sectors unity and of its organization in assemblies, in strike and struggle committees,, centralized at the national scale !

Everywhere, in all countries, let's reject austerity and misery !

To the international class front of the bourgeoisie, let's oppose the international class front of the proletariat !

Down with capitalism !

February 26th, 2012

The Fraction of the International Communist Left.

**Nota bene** : we refer our readers to the first pages, English, French and Spanish, of our web site which present the summary of our bulletin 7 to find the leaflet we had distributed last October *It's time to follow the path that the proletarian class shows us in Greece!* For the essential, it seems to us still valid and we think the comments above actualize and give elements to define an orientation for political orientation for the communists and for slogans as well as the international level as in Greece itself.

## Comments on the international significance of the presidential election in France.

The result of the first round of the French presidential race comes at the very moment we end up this bulletin. These elections don't interest only the French bourgeoisie. Their results have an international significance, or at least European, at the time many countries of this continent will live new elections at the regular term of the previous mandates - Germany in particular - and at the very moment other national bourgeoisies provoke anticipated elections - such as in Netherlands. It is this international significance we want to highlight.

Actually, new configurations of the political apparatus are dawning with these elections which will tend to reproduce in the months and years to come. It is actually almost sure that the Socialist Party's candidate, François Hollande, will be the next French President<sup>3</sup>. The other outstanding fact of this election is the rising of a "Left of the Left" - the *Front de gauche* [Left Front] with Melenchon at its head - whose vertebral column is being the old stalinist apparatus of the PCF [French Communist Party]. This two political parties (PS and Front de gauche) of the Left of capital, far for being opposed one another as they attempt to make appear, are actually the two sharp edges of the single and same arm that the bourgeoisie intends to utilize today against the proletariat.

So we have a Left of "government" which will lead a policy in which the State intervention, State capitalism, will grow and strengthen, a neo-Keynesian policy - it is the meaning of Hollande's willingness to re-negotiate the "Stability Pact" with

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3 .We don't take too much risks betting on his election in 15 days according to the polls. But in case it won't happen and Sarkozy would finally be re-elected, we don't think this would question the basic question of our stance. The last "arguments" of the latter's electoral campaign, in particular his willingness to reconsider the European Stability Pact in favour to a policy of more sustained economical growth, the withdrawal of the French troops from Afghanistan - just for mentioning only these two significant elements amongst others -, take up the orientations put forwards by Hollande. The difference will be that Hollande's new team would be less marked by the orientations and the politics of the past and thus more capable to lead it than Sarkozy whose neoliberal past and its continual zigzags and hesitations at the level of the international politics have sowed doubt about his ability as State leader within the French bourgeoisie.

Merkel and the German bourgeoisie "to introduce some growth". It matters to underline that this willingness for "introducing a constituent of growth" in the European policy in front of the crisis is making progress within the different ruling classes : at the very moment the Dutch bourgeoisie is provoking anticipated elections, it is interesting to note that its fractions, up to now aligned on the "drastic reduction of the deficits and the sovereign debts" policy put forwards by Germany, wish to introduce "more growth". No illusion within the bourgeoisie : it knows that a possible growth "due to credit" won't solve the crisis. It knows that capitalism's contradictions express in a crisis of generalized over-production. And no illusion for the proletarians : this possible "growth" won't bring them any relief in their sufferings, nor pauses of the attacks they suffer. The willingness to impose, at least in Europe, an economical policy with a "constituent of growth" corresponds amongst the clever fractions of the bourgeoisie to their consciousness of the need to develop a European war industry even more efficient and a European defence which really deserves this name.

And we have with the *Front de gauche* a Left "called to remain in the opposition", with a "social" language, indeed "revolutionary" and "classist" one, which doesn't want to be "governing" and whose aim is to control, to flank, and to derail, then to defeat, the inescapable workers struggles in front the crisis and the attacks that the "Socialist governments" will hurl at. As doesn't stop claiming Melenchon, "*we are here to go on for long !*" The existence of the same kind of party is not new in Europe and the Party of the Left in Germany, *Die Linke*, exists now since many years, actually since the drastic measures of the German bourgeoisie has taken against the working class during the government of the... Socialist Schröder. Actually, the national bourgeoisies must adapt their State apparatus, and in particular the political apparatus, to the new conditions that the economical crisis imposes. In their great majority, in particular in Europe, the bourgeois teams in power are government teams which were formed before 2008, before the "sub-primes" crisis. They are marked by the "neo-liberal free-market" ideology and theories in fashion in the 1980's. And

yet the bankruptcy of "economical liberalism" handicaps seriously and deeply today these teams at the economical as well as political level. Actually, politicians, economists and other high-ranking officials or specialists who were brought up with the liberal free-market ideology, can certainly not apply from one day to another with the maximum effectiveness, it means from the point of view of the bourgeoisie of course, the new State measures and the more direct and massive intervention of the State, to conduct neo-keynesian policies...

These "economical" politics present a fundamental political goal : the indispensable preparation of the main imperialist powers for the generalized war. At that level, the European bourgeoisie must tackle to this task with decisiveness and determination. And then to adjust as efficient as possible the attacks against the working class since this one will have to pay not only for the present crisis but also for the war economy. This "economical" policy against the working class which won't prevent from massive proletarian reactions, must be accompanied, completed, by a device of Left forces speaking "in the name of the working class", leaning on the unions apparatus and whose objective is to control as much as possible these struggles, to make them derail from their aim and their class demands, to sabotage and to defeat them.

From this point of view, Hollande's election in France will certainly end up with the procrastinations and the hesitations of Sarkozy's "foreign" policy who, pro-American by "personal liking" if so we can say, had finally to submit to the requirements of the profound tendencies of the imperialist interests of the French bourgeoisie which inexorably drive it to remain linked and aligned with Germany. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that his figure is not enough reliable at that level and that the coming to power of a convinced pro-European will mark a supplementary step in the development and the affirmation of a more determined imperialist policy, in a more asserted

European diplomacy and policy of defence, in international initiatives towards the "emerging powers", China, Latin-America, which raise against the United-States, in the questioning of the dollar as "the international reserve currency", etc...

In this preparation to war, the bourgeoisie needs the greater order and stability. The ability of the new government teams to control and defeat the workers struggles with the action of radical Left opposition forces is a central necessity which comes to strengthen even more the necessary coming of new political teams and new political men that are not hampered by the politics of the past. Because, besides the sabotage of the workers struggles, the ultra-chauvinist language of Melenchon and the PCF in the name of the "revolutionary ideal of the 1789 French revolution and of the 1871 *Commune de Paris*" will complete at the ideological level the dirty work done in the very struggles. There too, Hollande needs Melenchon, both reunited around the French tricolour flag ! Both aim at chaining the French proletariat to it. No doubt that the other bourgeoisie will find their equivalents within their own ranks. Is not already the case with *Die Linke* in Germany ?

Far from representing a decline of the attacks against the proletariat and even less a relief for this one, the adaptation of the political apparatus of the bourgeois States, included and above all with Left governments, means that the ruling class is preparing to bring even stronger attacks. Far from representing a lull of the classes struggle, the coming of these new apparatus marks at the contrary the increase and the escalation of the class contradictions. Far from meaning a slack period, the coming of new government teams accompanied with radical Left forces in the opposition, means the worsening of the bourgeoisie's offensive against the proletariat.

The FICL, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012

## DEFENCE OF THE PROLETARIAN CHARACTER OF OCTOBER 1917

### 1917, The Proletariat Takes Power (Internationalist Communist Tendency)

*We reproduce here an article of the ICT about the seizure of power by the proletariat in Russia in October 1917. Actually, this article is a chapter of a pamphlet of the Communist Workers Organization that the comrades have decided to re-publish parts on their web site ([www.leftcom.org](http://www.leftcom.org)). This chapter deals only with the October days, the very ones of the workers insurrection and of the seizure of power by the "Soviets" or "workers councils" - organs of the proletarian insurrection and of the exercise of power, it means the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Trotsky defined them.*

*We want to underline the merit of this text for its capacity to present, concretely, how the soviets as forms of organization of the whole Russian proletariat, were able to realize their historical task under the leadership of the Communist Party (the Bolshevik Party), genuine political vanguard of the proletariat. And how this one could pull itself up at the level of its task only thanks to the revolutionary mobilization of workers and soldiers masses and at the cost of internal political struggles within the very Party. In short, one of the qualities of the text is to highlight and to emphasize the "dialectical relationship" which concretely established at that moment between the Party and the whole revolutionary class and which guaranteed the success of the workers insurrection.*

*Thus, this text ruins the thesis ceaseless repeated according to which October 1917 was a simple "coup d'Etat" organized by a minority of professional revolutionaries led by Lenin's iron hand. One of the arguments of this thesis is that the insurrection, more particularly the storming of the Winter Palace, Kerenski's government building, occurred in a city where calm was prevailing and that it has been a success because the weakness of the armed defenders of the bourgeois government. The ICT text responds, it could not be clearer, to this problem. It shows that it is precisely the strength and the massive mobilization of the proletariat, politically regrouped around the Bolshevik Party, and even sometimes being ahead of this one or of important fractions of this one, which enabled that the State bourgeois power felt down then as a ripe fruit, with few confrontations and victims. This "easiness" of the insurrection is, all the contrary, the expression of the strength and the high consciousness of the great masses of the proletariat at that very moment and of their direct and massive participation to the seizure of power ; it is the anti-thesis of the "coup d'Etat" imposed by a minority.*

*As well, the text rejects the mystification of an homogeneous and decided Bolshevik Party or being under one single man's iron rule, it means under Lenin's. All the contrary, it highlights how the vanguard Party itself was living through the same kinds of hesitations and contradictions as the whole class and how the political fight to win the Party to the insurrection has been difficult and even could have been lost. And how it is precisely the strength and revolutionary mobilization of the proletarian masses, on which Lenin and some fractions of the Party leaned on, which enabled to lead the struggle against those who opposed to the insurrection within the very organs of the Bolshevik leadership.*

*Finally, and lesson as much important, the ICT comrades' article enlivens how Lenin and the Party were guided by two essential class principles which enable them to be at the level of the situation : the first one can be defined as the need of the destruction of the bourgeois State and the setting up of the Dictatorship of the proletariat ; this principle directs and defines all the communist politics in the revolutionary periods as well as in the periods when the classes struggle is less acute and more "daily", included when the proletariat is not massively mobilized<sup>4</sup> ; the second one, as well permanent and fundamental, is proletarian internationalism. Just a word on this : it is precisely the Bolsheviks' internationalist vision, which can't be reduced to the only denunciation of the imperialist war but which includes the call for civil war, for the destruction of the bourgeois State and to the setting up of the Dictatorship of the proletariat - here is the genuine and consequent class internationalism - which enables them to understand the absolute necessity to set up the power of the soviets as first pressure point for the whole international proletariat*

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4 We can't develop here on this question. Let's just mention that the experience of the Bolshevik Party and above all Lenin's - we could also to some extent quote Trotsky - since the beginnings of the Russian Social-Democracy is marked by their ability to judge every situation and to determine the communist intervention in relation to this principle, in relation to the relationship to the bourgeois State, it means the necessary and inescapable political class confrontation with this one and **at all moment, at all steps, of the classes struggle.**



while the imperialist war, the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, was carrying on<sup>5</sup> ; and as concrete, material, factor with above all the international dimension of the struggle against the imperialist war and for the international revolution.

We can see it, the article of the ICT comrades is not an "historical" text about a past experience whose lessons could eventually be drawn and then "passing to other thing". At the very moment capitalism is falling into deep crisis which obliges the bourgeoisie to attack fiercely the proletariat in all countries and, at the same time, to prepare the only outcome it can present in front of its economical bankruptcy, it means the generalized war, the lessons of October 1917 become again essential for the very development of the class fight of today ; and for presenting the proletarian and communist alternative to capitalist barbarity. The ICT text comes to recall us the **actuality of the Russian Revolution**, of its principles and its lessons, and the **flagship** it is for the historical struggle of the international proletariat.

March 2012, la FICL.

### 1917, The Proletariat Takes Power

"On the evening of October 24th the Provisional Government had at its disposal little more than 25,000 men. On the evening of October 25th, when preparations were underway for the storming of the Winter Palace, the Bolsheviks assembled about 20,000 Red Guards, sailors and soldiers before that last refuge of the Provisional Government. But within the palace there were not more than 3000 defenders, and many of those left their posts during the night. Thanks to the Bolsheviks' overwhelming superiority there were no serious battles in the capital from October 24th to October 26th, and the total number of those killed on both sides was no more than 15, with no more than 60 wounded.

During these critical hours, as all the main strategic points in the city passed under Bolshevik control (telephone and telegraph exchanges, bridges, railroad stations, the Winter Palace etc.), Petrograd continued on the whole to go about its normal business. Most of the soldiers remained in the barracks, the plants and the factories continued to operate, and in the schools none of the classes were interrupted. There were no strikes or mass demonstrations such had accompanied the February Revolution. The movie theatres (called cinematographias in those days) were filled, there were regular performances in all the theatres, and people strolled as usual on the Nevsky prospect. The ordinary non-political person would not even have noticed the historic events taking place; even on the streetcar lines, the main form of public transportation in 1917, service remained normal. It was in one of those streetcars that Lenin, in disguise, and his bodyguard Eino Rahya travelled to Smolny late on the evening of the 24th."

Thus the Soviet "dissident" historian, Roy Medvedev describes the October Revolution. This picture of Lenin

going to the revolution on a tram also conforms with Trotsky's view of those days.

"Demonstrations, street fights, barricades — everything comprised in the usual idea of insurrection — were almost entirely absent. The revolution had no need of solving a problem already solved. The seizure of the governmental machine could be carried through according to plan with the help of comparatively small armed detachments guided from a single centre ... the very fact that the resistance of the government came down to a defence of the Winter Palace, clearly defines the place occupied by October 25th in the whole course of the struggle. The Winter Palace was the last redoubt of a regime politically shattered during its eight months existence and conclusively disarmed during the preceding two weeks." (The Russian Revolution, p. 1138).

The Russian privileged classes had expected an orgy of looting and murder, political chaos and the collapse of human morality. Instead they were faced with an ordered transition which must have been even more terrifying for them. The proletarian masses had shown they had no need of rulers but could found their own forms of government. Of course, this was later turned into a criticism of the October Revolution by the historians of our class enemy who portrayed the proletarian revolution only in terms of its final act. They could thus spread the legend that this was simply a putsch, a *coup d'état* by a small, fanatical, group whilst the masses passively sat on the sidelines. It is surprising that such a myth has not collapsed under the weight of its own absurdity. Apart from the fact that the Bolshevik Party had 300,000 members or the fact that it had the active support of nearly every soldier in Petersburg (about 300,000 men), how was it possible for them to have debated publicly the seizure of power in the press

5 The concrete and real dimension of the internationalism of the Bolshevik Party is particularly to be underlined here since it is challenged by the new "innovators" who call it into question as we underline it in the presentation we make of Onorato Damen's text, *The Russia we love and defend*, written in 1943 and that we reproduce in this issue of our bulletin.

for all to read for a fortnight before the final arrest of the Provisional Government? Establishing the proletarian nature of the October Revolution is not our aim here since we take this as a given fact. What we need to look at are the circumstances under which that revolution took place, to examine not only how the proletariat made the Bolshevik Party its instrument but also how the tactics of the Bolsheviks were tested in the complex situation of September and October 1917.

### **Can the Bolsheviks Win State Power?**

The fate of the bourgeois order in Russia was sealed from the moment that the armies of the Kaiser occupied Riga in August 1917. Instead of the promised victories the Germans were now poised to go all the way to Petersburg. Lenin, however, had been arguing for insurrection from the moment he realised that the other so-called socialist parties (the Mensheviks and the S.R.s), true to their theory of supporting a bourgeois system, did not intend to support soviet power. But the Bolshevik Central Committee seemed to be ignoring his letters. What was worse for him was that, as he sat in hiding, the Bolshevik Central Committee seemed to be falling for Kerensky's attempts to bolster his tottering rule. In the aftermath of the defeat of Kornilov the Provisional Government called a "*Democratic Conference*" to try to rally the parties represented in the soviet around bourgeois rule. To Lenin's horror the Bolshevik Central Committee fell for this ruse and participated in this charade (Lenin singled out Trotsky for special praise for arguing for a boycott of this assembly). Furthermore, they also agreed to participate in the so-called "Preparliament" which Kerensky hoped to use to legitimise the position of his unelected government.

Lenin responded in a text called *From a Publicist's Diary* in which he denounced the Central Committee: "*There is not the slightest doubt that at the top of our Party there are noticeable vacillations that may become ruinous ... Not all is well with the "parliamentary" leaders of our Party; greater attention must be paid to them, there must be greater workers' supervision over them ... Our Party's mistake is obvious. The fighting party of the advanced class need not fear mistakes. What it should fear is persistence in a mistake ...*" (Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 340-1).

Not only did the Bolshevik leaders around Kamenev persist in mistakes, but they made them worse by suppressing all Lenin's criticisms of their approach to the Democratic Conference and the future insurrection. Although Lenin wrote thousands of words to stimulate them into action they ensured that the key passages were edited out. In frustration Lenin finally submitted

his resignation from the Central Committee but "reserving for myself freedom to campaign amongst the rank and file".

Although the Central Committee did not even discuss this resignation letter, it freed Lenin to take up private correspondence with individuals who were in other Party organisations. This once again revealed that Lenin was not an isolated figure battling against a mediocre party as all histories of the Russian Revolution make out. His struggle was against a party leadership which had become concerned more about the survival of the Party than the victory of the workers. Once the rest of the Party were aware of the issues they followed Lenin. The best example of this was the Petersburg Committee. When it learnt of the censorship of the discussion they were outraged against the Central Committee. In fact the really interesting discussion about the need for insurrection took place in the Petersburg Committee. Here there was no element like Kamenev who wanted a deal with the Mensheviks, and who did not really accept the internationalist orientation of the Bolsheviks. This had developed out of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences at the beginning of the First World War, and had been given new programmatic shape in Lenin's *Imperialism - the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. The international question was now obvious in the concerns of the Bolsheviks in Petersburg. In the debate over the need for insurrection the most coherent opponent of Lenin's was Volodarsky. He pointed to the backwardness of Russia and insisted that the Bolsheviks should mark time because the Russian Revolution could only succeed as part of a world revolution. Lenin's supporters agreed that the fate of the Russian Revolution was dependent on the fate of the world revolution. But they argued that the proletariat in backward Russia had been given a chance not yet offered to the working class anywhere else. The Russian workers must seize power and hold on whilst the European revolution developed.

This argument for not delaying any longer won the day. Lenin enshrined the internationalist position in his text *The Crisis has Matured*. This text like many others written in this period deserves to be read in full but we will content ourselves with just a few lines which indicate the internationalist essence of Bolshevism — the one factor that made it uniquely working class in the First World War.

*"The end of September undoubtedly marked a great turning point in the history of the Russian revolution and, to all appearances, of the world revolution as well ... This stage may be called the eve of revolution. Mass arrests of party leaders in free Italy, and particularly the beginning of mutinies in the German*

*army are indisputable symptoms that a great turning point is at hand, that we are on the eve of world-wide revolution ... And since of all the proletarian internationalists in all countries only we Russian Bolsheviks enjoy a measure of freedom - we have a legal party and a score or so of papers, we have the Soviets ... of both capitals on our side and we have the support of a majority of the people in a time of revolution - to us the saying "To whom much has been given, of him much will be required", in all justice can and must be applied." (Collected Works, Vol. II, pp. 342-3).*

It was an argument which won over the party, and on October 10th, the Central Committee voted to accept in principle the idea of organizing the insurrection. It was not simply a victory for one man, or even one party, but for the international working class. The problem now was how the insurrection would come about.

### **The Soldiers Become Bolsheviks**

As we showed in the previous chapter, the Bolsheviks won enormous support for their policies well before the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets was called. In fact 80% of the worker delegates to that body were Bolshevik supporters. However, this does not mean that the proletariat was imbued with a communist consciousness since this would have been an impossibility under the prevailing conditions. What they did have were concrete demands which accumulated as 1917 wore on. They wanted an end to the war and its associated miseries of food shortages and inflation.

They had seen that coalition with the bourgeois Provisional Government only continued the war. Furthermore, the Germans continued to advance closer to Petersburg and it was widely believed that Kerensky aimed to allow it to fall into enemy hands so that the revolution there could be crushed. All this meant that the Bolsheviks were bound to increase their support since they were the only party which opposed the war in unambiguous terms and which had all along called for "All Power to the Soviets". In October 1917 these issues became tied together as barracks after barracks voted not to obey orders to go to the front, and to listen only to the Soviets. Typical of these resolutions was that of the Egersky Guards Regiment on October 12th:

*"The pulling out of the revolutionary garrison from Petrograd is needed only by the privileged bourgeoisie as a means of stifling the revolution ... We declare to all who listen that, while refusing to leave Petrograd, we will nonetheless heed the voice of the genuine leaders of the workers and poorer peasantry, that is the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. We will believe in and follow it because everything else is pure treachery and*

*open mockery of the world revolution." (As quoted in Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, p. 227).*

This resolution was passed as part of the final critical struggle for control of the forces in Petersburg. On October 9th Trotsky had been able to get a resolution passed in the Petersburg Soviet which called for peace, the removal of the Kerensky government and, most significantly, proposed that the defence of Petersburg be undertaken by the Soviet itself. As a result of its acceptance this proposal created the famous Military Revolutionary Committee which was to coordinate the practical seizure of power on October 25th. Contrary to later Stalinist myths, the committee was not set up as a premeditated coordinator of the takeover. It only became so because the Mensheviks refused to take part in it. The committee was thus composed solely of Bolsheviks and Left S.Rs who were united on the need to transfer power to the soviets. Furthermore, the resolution to set up the Military Revolutionary Committee came before the Bolshevik Central Committee finally accepted Lenin's arguments about an immediate seizure of power. The final proof that the Military Revolutionary Committee was not foreseen as the organiser of the October Revolution was that Lenin, and most Bolsheviks (with the exceptions of Trotsky and Volodarsky) looked to the Bolsheviks' own Military Organisation to carry out the practical preparations. However, the latter, which had gone in for adventurism in July, had been so severely criticised within the Party that it now did not want to get its fingers burnt again. Their preparations were so deliberate and cautious that in the end they played a subsidiary, rather than a leading role.

The chief reason for this was, as with so many issues in 1917, the bourgeoisie's imperialist desires to continue the war. The war had brought the fall of Tsardom, it would now finally bring the end of the Russian bourgeoisie and their social democratic lapdogs in the S.R. and Menshevik Parties. In view of the fact that Kerensky needed the Petersburg garrison at the front and in view of the fact that the troops would not go, Kerensky was in fact faced with a mutiny from the moment the troops put themselves under the leadership of the Soviet's Military Revolutionary Committee. Once Kerensky and his Petersburg commander General Polkovnikov realised this, it was already too late. The Military Revolutionary Committee had managed to get commissars loyal to the Soviet elected in most of the regiments. When Kerensky realised he had few reliable troops in the capital he telegraphed for troops from the front but was told that the troops there were so "infested with Bolshevism" that they would refuse to move unless told the purpose of their transfer. In short the

Provisional Government was already virtually paralysed. When Kerensky finally did act on October 23rd it was to call for the arrest of all the Bolsheviks who were out on bail after the July Days (this included all the military leaders of the Party), and to close down the Bolshevik press for sedition. But in order to carry out these measures he had to rely on cadets from officer training schools, a women's shock battalion and a rifle regiment of war wounded. The forcible seizure of the *Trud* press where *Rabochii Put*, a Bolshevik paper addressed to workers, was published, was the signal for the Military Revolutionary Committee to react. The press was soon in workers' hands again and troops loyal to the Military Revolutionary Committee persuaded those thinking of responding to Kerensky's appeals to remain neutral. As with the Kornilov Affair, troops being moved towards the capital were also persuaded not to assist the counter-revolution.

Militarily there were now no obstacles to a seizure of power by the working class but there remained the question of when and how. This debate, which had raged in the Bolshevik Party throughout September, had still not been finally resolved despite the famous vote of October 10th. Whilst some members of the Military Revolutionary Committee wanted the immediate overthrow of Kerensky, other Bolsheviks still saw such an uprising as either wrong or premature. Trotsky summarised the situation correctly:

*"The government is powerless; we are not afraid of it because we have sufficient strength ... Some of our comrades, for example Kamenev and Riazanov, do not agree with our assessment of the situation. However we are leaning neither to the right or to the left. Our tactical line has been developed by developing circumstances. We grow stronger every day. Our task is to defend ourselves and gradually to expand our sphere of authority so as to build a solid foundation for tomorrow's Congress of Soviets."* (Quoted in Rabinowitch, p. 253).

This was not how Lenin liked it of course. After seven weeks of campaigning for an immediate uprising against a defeated enemy, he could not contain himself. For the second time in a month he disobeyed the Central Committee's instructions to remain in hiding and took his famous tram ride to the Bolshevik headquarters at the Smolny Institute. He had already sent an appeal to lower levels of the Party urging them to act before the Central Committee. It was a summary of all he had argued before:

*"History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact they risk losing*

*everything. If we seize power today, we seize it not in opposition to the soviets but on their behalf. It would be a disaster, or a sheer formality, to await the wavering vote of October 25. The people have the right and are in duty bound to decide such questions, not by a vote, but by force, in critical moments of the revolution ... The government is tottering. It must be given the deathblow at all costs. To delay action is fatal."*

In fact, both positions contain important elements of the truth. Trotsky recognised that there was no further chance for a new Kornilov to appear.

He saw that things were quickly enough as it was to a final denouement (and Trotsky was amongst the most active in ensuring the process was speeded up). Trotsky also knew something Lenin didn't, namely, that the composition of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets would be overwhelmingly for the overthrow of the Provisional Government. Lenin feared that it would still contain enough Mensheviks and S.Rs to postpone any decision on soviet power until the Constituent Assembly, "*which cannot possibly be favourable to us*", met. He wanted to present the other "*socialist parties*" with a *fait accompli*. If the Mensheviks rejected it then they would expose themselves as bourgeois in front of the working class. In fact this is almost how things turned out.

### Proletarian October

The October Revolution has been called the best planned revolution of all time. A militant proletariat, steeled in battle and with its own political instrument in the Bolshevik Party, took power in the most orderly of mass actions in history. However this should not obscure certain facts which are characteristic of the relation of party and class. The Bolshevik Central Committee never, at any time, decided on the date for insurrection. It was simply overruled by the march of events and it was the Bolshevik-controlled Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petersburg Soviet which directed the final attack. Even here though, the real political leadership of the Bolshevik Party lay, not in the committee rooms of Smolny, but on the streets.

When Kerensky sent cadets to close the bridges over the Neva (thus cutting Petersburg's centre from the working class districts on the Vyborg side) just as he had done in July.

*"... they were challenged by an irate crowd of citizens, many of them carrying weapons. Forced to give up their arms the cadets were escorted humiliatingly back to their academy; as nearly as can be determined, this action took place without any specific directives from the Military Revolutionary Committee. Similarly, as soon as the struggle for the bridges began, Ilyin-*

*Zhenevsky, also acting on his own, saw to it that garrison soldiers took control of the smaller Grenadersky and Samsonevsky bridges ..."* (Rabinowitch p.261).

In short, despite all the planning and all the debates the revolution was not the work of a minority simply leading a passive majority. The Bolsheviks as a military directing centre were not as well-prepared as Stalinist histories have made out. Their real success as a leadership of the working class was in imbuing the mass movement with clear goals that it could follow. Thus the Liteiny Bridge was shut by workers acting on their own consciousness of the importance of the situation, whilst an individual Bolshevik (Ilyin-Zhenevsky) doesn't wait for instructions from the "centre", but can act on his own initiative in accordance with the demands of the situation. As we have shown throughout this document, the Bolsheviks' fitness for the revolutionary task was not the result of some assumed infallibility in strategy and tactics but in the fact that it was a party genuinely rooted in the class conscious vanguard of the working class - and a party capable of learning from its mistakes. In this sense it was the organiser of the proletariat in the October Revolution.

Without its general direction of the class vanguard the October Revolution would have become another heroic failure to put on a historical list that is already too long.

The final evidence of the Bolsheviks' leadership of the masses came in the figures of the allegiance of the delegates to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets which gave the Bolsheviks 300 and the S.Rs 193 (of which half were Left S.Rs who supported the overthrow of the Provisional Government), whilst there were 68 Mensheviks and 14 of Martov's Menshevik Internationalists. The remainder were mainly non-affiliated but, as the voting soon showed, largely followed the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks supported a motion by Martov to establish a coalition government of all the socialist parties, but this was sabotaged by the Mensheviks and S.Rs, who made it clear they were walking out of the Congress. They hoped to mobilise the proletariat against the Bolsheviks but in fact, as the proletariat supported the Bolsheviks they simply walked, in Trotsky's words, into "*the dustbin of history*". This one Menshevik-Internationalist,

Sukhanov, realised when he later wrote:

"By quitting the Congress, we ourselves gave the Bolsheviks a monopoly of the Soviet, of the masses and of the revolution."

Despite further attempts by Martov's Menshevik Internationalists to try to form a coalition including those parties which rejected soviet power, the Congress now overwhelmingly endorsed the insurrection. At about the same time the Winter Palace fell into the hands of the working class and the members of the Provisional government were arrested – the only arrests made by the working class. Kerensky had earlier escaped to try to rally frontline troops. This turned out to be another demonstration of the overwhelming victory of the Bolsheviks since his efforts almost ended with his own arrest. Disguised as woman, he fled Russia to write increasingly mendacious memoirs at Harvard law School over the next half century.

Meanwhile Lenin has emerged from the shadows of hiding to greet the Congress of Soviets with the simple statement "*We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order*". The real history of the Russian working class revolution had begun...

#### **A List of the Main Books Referred to in this Text**

There are literally hundreds of texts on the Russian Revolution and many more were consulted than will appear here. The following list is simply of those editions in English which were actually quoted in the text. Unless stated, editions that were published in London have been used.

- J. Carmichael, *A Short History of the Russian Revolution*, 1980.
- E.H.Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution (Volume One)*, 1972
- M. Ferro, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, 1985.
- N. Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, 1983.
- M. Leibman, *Leninism under Lenin*, 1980.
- A. Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, 1979.
- F. Raskolnikov, *Kronstadt and Petrograd*, 1982.
- N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution 1917*, 1984 (Princeton, NJ).
- L. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, 1977.

## STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPORTUNISM

### The Russia We Love and Defend (*Prometeo* n° 2 - December 1943)

We reproduce here the article that the ICT has translated into English and which had been written in December 1943 by Onorato Damen and published in *Prometeo* n°2, the review of the Internationalist Communist Party which had just been formed in Italy at the very moment that the Italian proletariat was raising, during war, its head through strikes and demonstrations against the misery it was suffering. The presentation of the ICT comrades recalls the conditions and the goal of this text which reasserts its conviction in the principles and the ideals of the October 1917 proletarian insurrection, in the Russian Revolution, and in the need for the proletariat "to fight for its own revolutionary programme like that of the early years of the Russian Revolution after 1917". Just that reason itself largely would justify the reproduction of this text.

But according to us, there is another political interest which has today a particular importance : since some times, we have seen questionings more or less explicit of this experience **within those** who claim the Communist Left and its political legacy - **whose central element is and remains being the uncompromising defence of the proletarian character of the Russian Revolution as well as the defence of the Bolshevik Party**<sup>6</sup>. Certainly, already since the years 1930, the councilist current rejects the experience of the Russian Revolution by defining it as a bourgeois revolution, even as a simple "coup d'état" of the Bolsheviks and Lenin. But it tends today to be joined by all a sphere stemming from the Communist Left, in particular from the ICC. Lately, around the publishing house Smolny (France) and on the occasion of the publication of a book about the Russian review *Komunist* of 1918, we have seen these circles adopting suddenly, first the "infantile" position of Bukharin and of the fraction grouping around him against the signature of the Brest-Litvosk Peace Treaty between the Russia of the Soviets and Germany<sup>7</sup> ; and second, drawing a line of continuity between the struggle of this fraction and the Left fractions which, afterwards, opposed to the rising of stalinism and to counter-revolution. By establishing this fallacious continuity, these circles give credit to this view - and even take it back explicitly - according to which "the worm was in the fruit" since the beginning, since the October insurrection, and that Lenin's Bolshevik Party is the main responsible for the "confiscation" of the Revolution.

The text published by the ICT today comes to reaffirm the political and programmatic legacy of the Communist Left and is resolutely full part of what is also a fundamental political fight not only for the final success of a revolutionary process but also at the immediate level for at the same time favouring the revolutionary regroupment and the process driving to the setting up of the Communist Party as well as making the today communists, as weak and isolated they presently are, actors, active factors and leaders of the development of the workers struggles in front of capitalism's crisis. "And the workers who have defended, and still defend Russia as the first great experiment of their class, have to finally understand the reason why we communists do not hesitate to state our opposition to the Russia of Stalin while, at the same time, we proclaim ourselves faithful fighters for the Russia of Lenin", says Onorato Damen's text.

It was true in 1943. It is still even more today. The defence of the proletarian character of October and of the Bolshevik Party is a central element of the massive confrontation between the classes whose process does not but begin today. Only those who don't understand the primacy, leading, and fundamental role of the highest expressions of class consciousness, it means the communist organizations, can be surprised at such assertion. If the revolutionaries and above all their organization, the Communist Party, should pass through hesitations - to say the least - in this fight for the defence of the Russian Revolution, then this party would lack of one of its main compasses and its capacity to be the vanguard Party, the leading Party, of the proletariat would be seriously handicapped. It is precisely what the bourgeoisie has understood and why it does not stop attacking and distorting at the ideological and propagandistic level the proletarian character of the Russian October. Doing so, it succeeds in introducing within the very ranks of the proletarian camp, of the communist forces, doubts and it also finds in it allies we must resolutely fight against with no hesitation.

March 2012, the FICL.

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6 About the publication of a book by the Smolny Publishing Edition : [The Defence of the Proletarian Character of the October Revolution is still a class frontier !](#) (*International Communist Bulletin* 7).

7 "In regards to these basics which define the socialist nature of a revolution, the October's one must be characterized as a **confiscated** socialist revolution. Actually, if the Bolshevik Party has unquestionably been at the vanguard of the international communist movement and has catalysed the revolutionary process in Russia, it is also proved that, **since the insurrection**, it has been progressively substituting the soviets by assuming the power in their place." (Preface to the publication in French of the texts of the review *Komunist*, editions Smolny, we underline.)

### The Russia We Love and Defend

(From *Prometeo* 2 (December 1943) - This article was the first Onorato Damen wrote in *Prometeo* the still clandestine publication of the newly-formed Internationalist Communist Party. Its context is the opposition to the wartime Allies of the USSR, the USA and the UK in the imperialist war against the Axis powers. After the fall of Mussolini all sectors of the Italian bourgeoisie were flocking to support the Allies. The newly formed Italian Communist Party of Togliatti actively encouraged this as it took on the mantle of "defending democracy". The article here was intended to emphasise the need for the working class to fight for its own revolutionary programme like that of the early years of the Russian Revolution after 1917 and against the degeneration that had occurred under Stalin. (ICT's Presentation, 2012).

It is no accident that today we communists, the unwavering supporters and defenders of the Russian Revolution, of its ideas and of its first actions, have to defend ourselves from the accusation of now being against this great historic experience. This accusation is thrown at us by those who were the Revolution's most open and ferocious enemies during the period when the bourgeois liberal and social democratic coalition tried to strangle it either militarily with mercenary banditry or through starvation; and sought to isolate it from the capitalist world behind a barbed wire fence of defamation and conspiracy.

Such a complete change of mind, and of political sympathy, towards Russia is much less surprising than may be imagined. In the light of Marxism it is easily understandable. Today this sympathy and solidarity runs from the Church to the captains of industry, from the Socialists to the magnates of high finance.

We are not amongst these; and the workers who have defended, and still defend Russia as the first great experiment of their class, have to finally understand the reason why we communists do not hesitate to state our opposition to the Russia of Stalin while, at the same time, we proclaim ourselves faithful fighters for the Russia of Lenin.

For us the revolutionary events were not insignificant trifles and we adhere completely to the ideas of October through our absolute dedication to the cause of the Russian Revolution, the beginning of the international revolution. For more than twenty years most of us have given everything to its cause: financial interests, family affections, freedom, often ending up in prison, internment or concentration camps. And so it is that the thankless, but necessary and inescapable task of

not remaining silent on the truth about Russia therefore falls to us. We have learned in the school of Marxism to struggle openly and firmly against myths, against any kind of 'taboo', and for the most concrete truths of the class struggle.

And before we set out our ideas we would like those workers who have held on to their critical capacities, and whose class instincts have not been contaminated, to consider the real reasons which lie behind the profound and sudden solidarity of so many bourgeois reactionaries with the Russia of today, and from which we can define its true nature. For ourselves, we want to clarify here some aspects of this vexed problem and we are sure we shall all reach the same conclusions.

1. The bourgeoisie's passionate and noisy love for Stalin's Russia is a direct result of their interest in preserving the capitalist system. It follows from this that what we love, the bourgeoisie through class antagonism, naturally hates. When our theoretical critique and our Party's actions put us at the forefront of the class struggle, the bourgeoisie cannot stomach it.

2. The legitimisation of the Second imperialist war in Stalinist "people's war for democracy", and the official recognition by the Orthodox Church which naturally supported the war for the great Slav fatherland, has deeply impressed the honest bourgeois who are always full of love for the fatherland. To legitimise the war meant to tie the working masses to it, to chain them to that most brutal and hateful force, chauvinism, in order to make victory certain, and with it the salvation of capital.

3. The bolshevisation of the Russian (Communist) Party and the International, the liquidation in these

bodies of leading organised expressions of the proletariat and their substitution by the stupid servants of opportunism, the inequalities in wages which inevitably restored social differences; the role assumed by the State and party bureaucracy, the dominance of the class of technicians which came from forced industrialisation and the rise of the Church as a prominent force; the pre-eminence of the State in the place of the dictatorship of proletariat; the Five Year Plans for the intensive exploitation of a re-created subject class of workers - these are all the surface features which confirm that the interests of Russia are no longer those of the proletariat ... At this point those who have ditched the revolution deemed it opportune to demonstrate their loyalty and consistency of the new direction in Russian policy to the international bourgeoisie, sacrificing on the alter of democratic concord the men of the old guard, the incorruptible builders of the October Revolution. This is the Russia dear to the hearts of Roosevelt, of Churchill and all international radicals - but it is not ours.

4. The Russia which we love and defend, as a revolutionary achievement, is that Russia of the proletariat and poor peasantry who under the

guidance of Lenin and the revolutionary party dared to break the framework of feudalism and capitalism and to pose the class dictatorship - the transitional proletarian state power whose goal has to be to signal the destruction of that very state and that very class, The Russia which we love and defend is that Russia which for years its proletariat and to the international proletariat the consciousness of its force, the historic sense of its revolutionary role, the organic demonstration of the new workers' world that has its creative heart in the 'Soviets'.

The Russia which we love and defend is that Russia which for years had to operate clandestinely in the shadow of the present 'Bolshevik' Party and which in the prisons, in the deportations throughout the Russian wastes preserved intact its faith in the principles of October and which is waiting for the time when it will be able to unite its revolutionary re-awakening with that of the international proletariat. This is the Russia of our anti-bourgeois struggle, the Russia of our unchanging revolutionary passion.

Onorato Damen



## TEXT OF THE WORKERS MOVEMENT

### V. I. Lenin : The Constituent Assembly Elections and The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

*In the following, we reproduce a Lenin's article which responds to those who blames the Bolsheviks for not having respected the "democratic vote of the people" for the Constituent Assembly and for having substituted to it the dictatorship of the workers councils. Besides the recall of the historical experience of the proletariat and the defence of the workers insurrection and the dictatorship of the proletariat, it means the Russian October 1917, the worth of the text lies also in the recall of the fundamental importance of the proletariat's fight against opportunism in its ranks. This one is not a secondary or related dimension of the communist's struggle but we'll and truly its central, fundamental and constant dimension. And it does not limit itself to the "simple" theoretical reflection and to the "simple" defence of the principles developed by the theoretical weapon of the proletariat, marxism. It enlarges and takes all its extent in the real, concrete, fight of the classes struggle when the opportunist currents and those remaining faithful to communism materialize and oppose in the historical reality, it means in the classes struggle, both positioning on each opposed side of the class barricade.*

*The FICL*

### V. I. Lenin : The Constituent Assembly Elections and The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

On the basis of the returns of the Constituent Assembly elections we have studied the three conditions which determined the victory of Bolshevism: (1) an overwhelming majority among the proletariat; (2) almost half of the armed forces; (3) an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment at the decisive points, namely: in Petrograd and Moscow and on the war fronts near the centre.

But these conditions could have ensured only a very short-lived and unstable victory had the Bolsheviks been unable to win to their side the majority of the *non-proletarian* working masses, to win them from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other petty-bourgeois parties.

That is the main thing.

And the chief reason why the "socialists" (read: petty-bourgeois democrats) of the Second International fail to understand the dictatorship of the proletariat is that they fail to understand that

*state power in the hands of one class, the proletariat, can and must become an instrument for winning to the side of the proletariat the non-proletarian working masses, an instrument for winning those masses from the bourgeoisie and from the petty-bourgeois parties.*

Filled with petty-bourgeois prejudices, forgetting the most important thing in the teachings of Marx about the state, the "socialists" of the Second International regard *state power* as something holy, as an idol, or as the result of formal voting, the absolute of "consistent democracy" (or what ever else they call this nonsense). They fail to see that state power is simply an *instrument* which *different* classes can and must use (and know

how to use) *for their class aims.*

The bourgeoisie has used state power as an instrument of the capitalist class against the proletariat, against all the working people. That has been the case in the most democratic bourgeois republics. Only the betrayers of Marxism have "forgotten" this.

The proletariat must (after mustering sufficiently strong political and military "striking forces") overthrow the bourgeoisie, take state power from it in order to use that *instrument* for its class aims.

What are the class aims of the-proletariat?

Suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie;  
Neutralise the peasantry and, if possible, win them over (at any rate the majority of the labouring, non-exploiting section) to the side of the proletariat;  
Organise large-scale machine production, using factories, and means of production in general, expropriated from the bourgeoisie;  
Organise socialism on the ruins of capitalism.

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In mockery of the teachings of Marx, those gentlemen, the opportunists, including the Kautskyites, "teach" the people that the proletariat must first win a majority by means of universal suffrage, then obtain state power, by the vote of that majority, and only after that, on the basis of "consistent" (some call it "pure") democracy, organise socialism.

But we say on the basis of the teachings of Marx and the experience of the Russian revolution: the proletariat must first overthrow the bourgeoisie and win *for itself* state power, and then use that state power,

that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat, as an instrument of its class for the purpose of winning the sympathy of the majority of the working people.

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How can state power in the hands of the proletariat become the instrument of its class struggle for influence over the non-proletarian working people, of the struggle to draw them to its side, to win them over, to wrest them from the bourgeoisie?

First, the proletariat achieves this *not* by putting into operation the old apparatus of state power, but by *smashing* it to pieces, levelling it with the ground (in spite of the howls of frightened philistines and the threats of saboteurs) and building a *new* state apparatus. That new state apparatus is adapted to the dictatorship of the proletariat and to its struggle against the bourgeoisie to *win* the non-proletarian working people. That new apparatus is not anybody's invention, it *grows* out of the proletarian class struggle as that struggle becomes more widespread and intense. That new apparatus of state power, the new *type* of state power, is *Soviet power*.

The Russian proletariat, immediately, a few hours after winning state power, proclaimed the dissolution of the old state apparatus (which, as Marx showed, had been for centuries adapted to serve the class interests of the bourgeoisie, even in the most democratic republic<sup>[4]</sup>) and transferred *all power to the Soviets* ; and only the working and exploited people could enter the Soviets, all exploiters of every kind were excluded.

In that way the proletariat at once, at one stroke, immediately *after* it had taken state power, *won* from the bourgeoisie *the vast mass* of its supporters in the petty-bourgeois and "socialist" parties; for that mass, the working and exploited people who had been deceived by the bourgeoisie (and by its yes-men, the Chernovs, Kautskys, Martovs and Co.), *on obtaining Soviet power*, acquired, *for the first time*, an instrument of mass struggle for their interests against the bourgeoisie.

Secondly, the proletariat can, and must, at once, or at all events very quickly, win from the bourgeoisie and from petty-bourgeois democrats "*their*" masses, i.e., the masses which follow them—win them *by satisfying their most urgent economic needs in a revolutionary way by expropriating the landowners and the bourgeoisie*.

The bourgeoisie *cannot* do that, no matter how "mighty" its state power may be.

The proletariat *can* do that on the very next day after it has won state power, because for this it has both an

apparatus (the Soviets) and economic means (the expropriation of the landowners and the bourgeoisie).

That is exactly how the Russian proletariat *won the peasantry* from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and won them literally *a few hours after* achieving state power; a few hours after the victory over the bourgeoisie in Petrograd, the victorious proletariat issued a "decree on land", and in that decree it entirely, at once, with revolutionary swiftness, energy and devotion, *satisfied* all the most urgent economic needs of the *majority* of the peasants, it expropriated the landowners, entirely and without compensation.

To prove to the peasants that the proletarians did not want to steam-roller them, did not want to boss them, but to help them and be their friends, the victorious Bolsheviks did not put *a single word of their own* into that "decree on land", but copied it, word for word, from the peasant mandates (the most revolutionary of them, of course) which the *Socialist-Revolutionaries* had published in the *Socialist-Revolutionary* newspaper. The Socialist-Revolutionaries fumed and raved, protested and howled that "the Bolsheviks had stolen their programme", but they were only laughed at for that; a fine party, indeed, which had to be defeated and driven from the government in order that everything in its programme that was revolutionary and of benefit to the working people could be carried out!

The traitors, blockheads and pedants of the Second International could never understand such dialectics; the proletariat cannot achieve victory if it does not win the majority of the population to its side. But to limit that winning to polling a majority of votes in an election *under the rule of the bourgeoisie*, or to make it the condition for it, is crass stupidity, or else sheer deception of the workers. In order to win the majority of the population to its side the proletariat must, in the first p]ace, overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize state power; secondly, it must introduce Soviet power and complete]y smash the old state apparatus, whereby it immediately undermines the rule, prestige and influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois compromisers over the non-proletarian working people. Thirdly, it must *entirely destroy* the influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois compromisers over the *majority* of the non-proletarian masses by satisfying *their* economic needs *in a revolutionary way at the expense of the exploiters*.

It is possible to do this, of course, only when capitalist development has reached a certain level. Failing that fundamental condition, the proletariat cannot develop into a separate class, nor can success be achieved in its prolonged training, education, instruction and trial in

battle during long years of strikes and demonstrations when the opportunists are disgraced and expelled. Failing that fundamental condition, the centres will not play that economic and political role which enables the proletariat, after their capture, to lay hold of state power in its entirety, or more correctly of its vital nerve, its core, its node. Failing that fundamental condition, there cannot be the kinship, closeness and bond between the position of the proletariat and that of the non-proletarian working people which (kinship, closeness and bond) are necessary for the proletariat to influence those masses, for its influence over them to be effective.

Let us proceed further.

The proletariat can win state power, establish the Soviet system, and satisfy the economic needs of the majority of the working people at the expense of the exploiters. Is that sufficient for achieving complete and final victory? No, it is not.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, their chief present-day representatives, the “socialists” and “Social-Democrats”, are suffering from illusions when they imagine that the working people are capable, under capitalism, of acquiring the high degree of class-consciousness, firmness of character, perception and wide political outlook that will enable them to decide, *merely by voting*, or at all events, to *decide* in advance, without long experience of struggle, that they will follow a particular class, or a particular party.

It is a mere illusion. It is a sentimental story invented by pedants and sentimental socialists of the Kautsky, Longuet and MacDonald type.

Capitalism would not be capitalism if it did not, on the one hand, condemn the *masses* to a downtrodden, crushed and terrified state of existence, to disunity (the countryside!) and ignorance, and if it (capitalism) did not, on the other hand, place in the hands of the bourgeoisie a gigantic apparatus of falsehood and deception to hoodwink the masses of workers and peasants, to stultify their minds, and so forth.

That is why only the proletariat can *lead the working people* out of capitalism to communism. It is no use thinking that the petty-bourgeois or semi-petty-bourgeois masses can decide in advance the extremely complicated political question: “to be with the working class or with the bourgeoisie”. The *vacillation* of the non-proletarian sections of the working people is inevitable; and inevitable also is their own *practical experience*, which will enable them to compare leadership by the bourgeoisie with leadership by the proletariat.

This is the circumstance that is constantly lost sight of by those who worship “consistent democracy” and who imagine that extremely important political problems can be solved by voting. Such problems are actually solved by *civil war* if they are acute and aggravated by struggle, and the *experience* of the non-proletarian masses (primarily of the peasants), their experience of comparing the rule of the proletariat with the rule of the bourgeoisie, is of tremendous importance in that war.

The Constituent Assembly elections in Russia in November 1917, compared with the two-year Civil War of 1917-19, are highly instructive in this respect.

See which districts proved to be the least Bolshevik. First, the East-Urals and the Siberian where the Bolsheviks polled 12 per cent and 10 per cent of the votes respectively. Secondly, the Ukraine where the Bolsheviks polled 10 per cent of the votes. Of the other districts, the Bolsheviks polled the smallest percentage of votes in the peasant district of Great Russia, the Volga-Black Earth district, but even there the Bolsheviks polled 16 per cent of the votes.

It was precisely in the districts where the Bolsheviks polled the lowest percentage of votes in November 1917 that the counter-revolutionary movements, the revolts and the organisation of counter-revolutionary forces had the greatest success. It was precisely in those districts that the rule of Kolchak and Denikin lasted for months and months.

The vacillation of the petty-bourgeois population was particularly marked in those districts where the influence of the proletariat is weakest. Vacillation was at first in favour of the Bolsheviks when they granted land and when the demobilised soldiers brought the news about peace; later—against the Bolsheviks when, to promote the international development of the revolution and to protect its centre in Russia, they agreed to sign the Treaty of Brest and thereby “offended” patriotic sentiments, the deepest of petty-bourgeois sentiments. The dictatorship of the proletariat was particularly displeasing to the peasants in those places where there were the largest stocks of surplus grain, when the Bolsheviks showed that they would strictly and firmly secure the transfer of those surplus stocks to the state at fixed prices. The peasants in the Urals, Siberia and the Ukraine turned to Kolchak and Denikin.

Further, the experience of Kolchak and Denikin “democracy”, about which every hack writer in Kolchakia and Denikia shouted in every issue of the whiteguard newspapers, showed the peasants that phrases about democracy and about the “Constituent Assembly” serve only as a screen to conceal the dictatorship of the landowners and capitalists.

Another turn towards Bolshevism began and peasant

revolts spread in the rear of Kolchak and Denikin. The peasants welcomed the Red troops as liberators.

In the long run, it was this vacillation of the peasantry, the main body of the petty-bourgeois working people, that decided the fate of Soviet rule and of the rule of Kolchak and Denikin. But this “long run” was preceded by a fairly lengthy period of severe struggle and painful trial, which have not ended in Russia after two years, have not ended precisely in Siberia and in the Ukraine. And there is no guarantee that they will end *completely* within, say, another year or so.

The supporters of “consistent” democracy have not given thought to the importance of this historic fact. They invented, and are still inventing, nursery tales about the proletariat under capitalism being able to “convince” the majority of the working people and win them firmly to its side by voting. But reality shows that only in the course of a long and fierce struggle does the stern experience of the *vacillating* petty bourgeoisie lead it to the conclusion, after comparing the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of the capitalists, that the former is better than the latter.

In theory, all socialists who have studied Marxism and are willing to take into account the lessons of the nineteenth century political history of the advanced countries recognise that the *vacillation* of the petty bourgeoisie between the proletariat and the capitalist class is inevitable. The economic roots of this vacillation are clearly revealed by economic science, the truths of which have been repeated millions of times in the newspapers, leaflets and pamphlets issued by the socialists of the Second International.

But these people cannot apply those truths to the peculiar epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They substitute petty-bourgeois-democratic prejudices and illusions (about class “equality”, about “consistent” or “pure” democracy, about solving great historic problems by voting, and so forth) for the *class struggle*. They will not understand that after capturing state power the proletariat does not thereby cease its class struggle, but continues it in a different form and by different means. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the proletariat conducted with the aid of an instrument like state power, a class struggle, one of whose aims is to demonstrate to the non-proletarian sections of the working people by means of their long experience and a long list of practical examples that it is more to their advantage to side with the dictatorship of the proletariat than with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and that there can be no third course.

The returns of the Constituent Assembly elections held in November 1917 give us the main background to the

picture of the development of the Civil War that has raged for two years since those elections. The main forces in that war were *already* clearly evident during the Constituent Assembly elections—the role of the “striking force” of the proletarian army, the role of the vacillating peasantry, and the role of the bourgeoisie were already apparent. In his article N .V. Svyatitsky writes: “The Cadets were most successful in the same regions where the Bolsheviks were most successful—in the Northern and Central-Industrial regions” (p. 116). Naturally, in the most highly developed capitalist centres, the intermediary elements standing between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie were the weakest. Naturally, in those centres, the class struggle was most acute. It was there that the main forces of the bourgeoisie were concentrated and there, only there, could the proletariat defeat the bourgeoisie. Only the proletariat could rout the bourgeoisie, and only after routing the bourgeoisie could the proletariat definitely win the sympathy and support of the petty-bourgeois strata of the population by using an instrument like state power.

If properly used, if correctly read, the returns of the Constituent Assembly elections reveal to us again and again the fundamental truths of the Marxist doctrine of the class struggle.

These returns, incidentally, also reveal the role and importance of the national question. Take the Ukraine. At the last conferences on the Ukrainian question some comrades accused the writer of these lines of giving too much “prominence” to the national question in the Ukraine. The returns of the Constituent Assembly elections show that in the Ukraine, as early as November 1917, the *Ukrainian* Socialist-Revolutionaries and socialists polled a majority (3.4 million votes + 0.5 = 3.9 million against 1.9 million polled by the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries, out of a total poll in the whole of the Ukraine of 7.6 million votes). In the army on the South-Western and Rumanian fronts the Ukrainian socialists polled 30 per cent and 34 per cent of the total votes (the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 40 per cent and 59 per cent).

Under these circumstances, to ignore the importance of the national question in the Ukraine—a sin of which Great Russians are often guilty (and of which the Jews are guilty perhaps only a little less often than the Great Russians)—is a great and dangerous mistake. The division between the Russian and Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries as early as 1917 could not have been accidental. As internationalists it is our duty, first, to combat very vigorously the survivals (sometimes unconscious) of Great-Russian imperialism and chauvinism among “Russian” Communists; and secondly, it is our duty, precisely on the national

question, which is a relatively minor one (for an internationalist the question of state frontiers is a secondary, if not a tenth-rate, question), to make concessions. There are other questions—the fundamental interests of the proletarian dictatorship; the interests of the unity and discipline of the Red Army which is fighting Denikin; the leading role of the proletariat in relation to the peasantry—that are more important; the question whether the Ukraine will be a separate state is far less important. We must not be in the least surprised, or frightened, even by the prospect of the Ukrainian workers and peasants trying out different systems, and in the course of, say, several years, testing by practice union with the R.S.F.S.R., or seceding from the latter and forming an independent Ukrainian S.S.R., or various forms of their close alliance, and so on, and so forth.

To attempt to settle this question in advance, once and for all, “firmly” and “irrevocably”, would be narrow-mindedness or sheer stupidity, for the vacillation of the non-proletarian working people on *such* a question is quite natural, even inevitable, but not in the least frightful for the proletariat. It is the duty of the proletarian who is really capable of being an internationalist to treat *such* vacillation with the greatest caution and tolerance, it is his duty to leave it to the non-proletarian masses *themselves* to *get rid* of this vacillation as a result of their own experience. We must be intolerant and ruthless, uncompromising and inflexible on other, more fundamental questions, some of which I have already pointed to above.

The comparison of the Constituent Assembly elections in November 1917 with the development of the proletarian revolution in Russia from October 1917 to December 1919 enables us to draw conclusions concerning bourgeois parliamentarism and the proletarian revolution in every capitalist country. Let me try briefly to formulate, or at least to outline, the principal conclusions.

1. Universal suffrage is an index of the level reached by the various classes in their understanding of their problems. It shows how the various classes are *inclined* to solve their problems. The actual *solution* of those problems is not provided by voting, but by the class struggle in all its forms including civil war.

2. The socialists and Social-Democrats of the Second International take the stand of vulgar petty-bourgeois democrats and share the prejudice that the fundamental problems of the class struggle can be solved by voting.

3. The party of the revolutionary proletariat must take part in bourgeois parliaments in order to enlighten the

masses; this can be done during elections and in the struggle between parties in parliament. But limiting the class struggle to the parliamentary struggle, or regarding the latter as the highest and decisive form, to which all the other forms of struggle are subordinate, is actually desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

4. All the representatives and supporters of the Second International, and all the leaders of the German, so-called “independent”, Social-Democratic Party, actually go over to the bourgeoisie in this way when they recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat in words, but in deeds, by their propaganda, imbue the proletariat with the idea that it must first obtain a formal expression of the will of the majority of the population under capitalism (i.e., a majority of votes in the bourgeois parliament) to transfer political power to the proletariat, which transfer is to take place later.

All the cries, based on this premise, of the German “independent” Social-Democrats and similar leaders of decayed socialism against the “dictatorship of a minority”, and so forth, merely indicate that those leaders fail to understand the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which actually reigns even in the most democratic republics, and that they fail to understand the conditions for its destruction by the class struggle of the proletariat.

5. This failure to understand consists, in particular, in the following: they forget that, to a very large degree, the bourgeois parties are able to rule because they deceive the masses of the people, because of the yoke of capital, and to this is added self-deception concerning the nature of capitalism, a self-deception which is characteristic mostly of the petty-bourgeois parties, which usually want to substitute more or less disguised forms of class conciliation for the class struggle.

“First let the majority of the population, while private property still exists, i.e., while the rule and yoke of capital still exist, express themselves in favour of the party of the proletariat and only then can and should the party take power”—so say the petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists but who are in reality the servitors of the bourgeoisie.

“Let the revolutionary proletariat first overthrow the bourgeoisie, break the yoke of capital, and smash the bourgeois state apparatus, then the victorious proletariat will be able rapidly to gain the sympathy and support of the majority of the non-proletarian working people by satisfying their needs at the expense of the exploiters”—say we. The opposite will be rare exception in history (and even in such an exception the bourgeoisie can resort to civil war, as the example of Finland showed)].

6. Or in other words:

“First we shall pledge ourselves to recognise the principle of equality, or consistent democracy, while preserving private property and the yoke of capital (i.e., actual inequality under formal equality), and try to obtain the decision of the majority on this basis”—say the bourgeoisie and their yes-men, the petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists and Social-Democrats.

“First the proletarian class struggle, winning state power, will destroy the pillars and foundations of actual inequality, and then the proletariat, which has defeated the exploiters, will lead all working people to the *abolition of classes*, i.e., to socialist *equality*, the only kind that is not a deception”— say we.

7. In all capitalist countries, besides the proletariat, or that part of the proletariat which is conscious of its revolutionary aims and is capable of fighting to achieve them, there are numerous politically immature proletarian, semi-proletarian, semi-petty-bourgeois strata which follow the bourgeoisie and bourgeois democracy (including the “socialists” of the Second International) because they have been deceived, have no confidence in their own strength, or in the strength of the proletariat, are unaware of the possibility of having their urgent needs satisfied by means of the expropriation of the exploiters.

These strata of the working and exploited people provide the vanguard of the proletariat with allies and give it a stable majority of the population; but the proletariat can win these allies only with the aid of an instrument like state power, that is to say, only after it has overthrown the bourgeoisie and has destroyed the bourgeois state apparatus.

8. The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population. That is because the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism, and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism.

Therefore, the proletariat, even when it constitutes a minority of the population (or when the class-conscious and really revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat constitutes a minority of the population), is capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and, after that, of winning to its side numerous allies from a mass of semi-

proletarians and petty bourgeoisie who never declare in advance in favour of the rule of the proletariat, who do not understand the conditions and aims of that rule, and only by their subsequent experience become convinced that the proletarian dictatorship is inevitable, proper and legitimate.

9. Finally, in every capitalist country there are always very broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie which inevitably vacillate between capital and labour. To achieve victory, the proletariat must, first, choose the right moment for its decisive assault on the bourgeoisie, taking into account, among other things, the disunity between the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois allies, or the instability of their alliance, and so forth. Secondly, the proletariat must, after its victory, utilise this vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie in such a way as to neutralise them, prevent their siding with the exploiters; it must be able to hold on for some time *in spite of this vacillation*, and so on, and so forth.

10. One of the necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for its victory is a long, stubborn and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and trends, which are inevitable, since the proletariat is operating in a capitalist environment. If there is no such struggle, if opportunism in the working-class movement is not utterly defeated beforehand, there can be no dictatorship of the proletariat. Bolshevism would not have defeated the bourgeoisie in 1917-19 if before that, in 1903-17, it had not learned to defeat the Mensheviks, i.e., the opportunists, reformists, social-chauvinists, and ruthlessly expel them from the party of the proletarian vanguard.

At the present time, the verbal recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat by the leaders of the German “Independents”, or by the French Longuetists, and the like, who are *actually* continuing the old, habitual policy of big and small concessions to and conciliation with opportunism, subservience to the prejudices of bourgeois democracy (“consistent democracy” or “pure democracy” as they call it) and bourgeois parliamentarism, and so forth, is the most dangerous self-deception—and sometimes sheer fooling of the workers.

December 16, 1919

## OUR POSITIONS

- Since the First World War, capitalism has been a decadent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a barbaric cycle of crisis, world war, reconstruction and new crisis. There is only one alternative offered by this irreversible historical decline : **socialism or barbarism**.
- The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step toward of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.
- The statified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba, etc. and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.
- Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.
- All the nationalist ideologies - 'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination' etc - whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.
- In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as Stalinism and fascism.
- All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist' and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists and ex-Maoists, official anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix up the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.
- With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.
- In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.
- Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the

working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organised mass action by the proletariat.

- The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards a confrontation with the capitalist state. In order to destroy capitalism, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale: the international power of the workers' councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.
- The communist transformation of society by the workers' councils does not mean 'self-management' or the nationalisation of the economy. Communism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a world community in which all activity is oriented towards the full satisfaction of human needs.
- The revolutionary political organisation constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active factor in the generalisation of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organise the working class' nor to 'take power' in its name, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of them for themselves, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political goals of the proletariat's combat.

## OUR ACTIVITY

- Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions.
- Organised intervention, united and centralised on an international scale, in order to contribute to the process which leads to the revolutionary action of the proletariat.
- The regroupment of revolutionaries with the aim of constituting a real world communist party, which is indispensable to the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a communist society.

## OUR ORIGINS

- The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the Communist League of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the International Workingmen's Association, 1864-72, the Socialist International, 1889-1914, the Communist International, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the German, Dutch and Italian Lefts.