

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

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GLOBAL REBELLION AGAINST CAPITALISM AND ITS SERVANTS



PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Director: Alejandro Bodart

Coordination: Martín Carcione

Design and layout: Tamara Migelson

Cover design: Guillermo Coppo



Find us here:

www.lis-isl.org

Mail: info@lis-isl.org

[f](#) Liga Internacional Socialista

[@](#) @ligainternacionalsocialista

[t](#) Liga Internacional Socialista @isl_lis

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Buenos Aires





A New Revolutionary Ascent SHAKES THE WORLD

■ ALEJANDRO BODART, MST LEADER AND ISL COORDINATOR

THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF ENORMOUS MAGNITUDE. IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE PLANET, WORKERS AND THE EXCLUDED ARE RISING AGAINST THEIR GOVERNMENTS AND THE POLITICAL REGIMES THAT SUSTAIN THEM. AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE REBELLIONS AND REVOLUTIONS THAT ARE TAKING PLACE IS THE YOUTH, WHICH THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IN ITS DECLINE IS LEAVING WITHOUT A FUTURE. IT IS MUCH MORE THAN A NEW MOMENT: WE ARE WITNESSING A CHANGE IN THE WORLD SITUATION.

In the month of October, there have been rebellions in Ecuador and Haiti and an extraordinary revolution in Chile. Thousands of kilometers away, rebellions in Iraq and Lebanon announce the awakening of a new Arab spring. In Europe, heroic Catalonia takes back to the streets, and in Asia, the rebellious Hong Kong does not bow to the brutality of the Chinese bureaucracy. On the first anniversary of the emergence of the French “yellow vests” - the precursors of changes that have since become widespread - the streets of Paris have relived the fires of those forgotten by the system. The powerful French working class prepares



a general strike of undefined duration for December 5. In countless countries, strikes and mobilizations are on the agenda. Parallel to the global economic crisis that continues to deepen, profound political crises emerge in many countries in which the mobilization has not yet reached the magnitude of other latitudes.

The political and social polarization that the world has been experiencing for years, now clearly begins to show the mass movement and its struggles taking the offensive.

In this new edition of *Permanent Revolution*, we will offer conclusions from some of the most dynamic processes, in most of which the national sections of the International Socialist League are actively participating.

Global rebellion, new May of '68, Latin American spring, the world on fire, are some of the journalistic expressions that the mass media is using to try to illustrate the new moment we are witnessing. There are manifestations of the change that is taking place on all continents, but there are two regions of the world that have become the epicenters of this new revolutionary ascent: Latin America and the Middle East. In both places, there is a prerevolutionary or directly revolutionary situation if we take Trotsky or Lenin's definitions as points of reference. Therefore any spark, such as a rise in the price of gasoline, the metro or even a tax on the use of WhatsApp, is capable of unleashing a revolution.

The Middle East and North Africa have changed forever. The revolutionary uprising known as the Arab Spring brought down governments and regimes that subjected their people to permanent austerity and an iron fist for decades. Qualitative changes occurred, even in the countries where the rebellions were defeated. The engine of all the uprisings and semi-insurrections that have taken place is a combination of social and democratic demands. The revolutionary wave of 2010-2013, which started with the immolation of street vendor Mohamed Bouaziz in Tunisia, quickly infected Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Yemen and Syria, and stimulated the struggle for self-determination of the Kurdish people. Another chapter took place at the end of 2018 and beginning of this year with new rebellions in Tunisia, Sudan and Algeria. We are currently witnessing profound rebellions in Iraq, Lebanon and now Iran, where a social uprising across the country is shaking the Mullah regime.

In Latin America, there had been no processes of the magnitude of what we are witnessing these days since the beginning of the century. Last year, the Nicaraguan youth and people rose against the austerity applied by the Ortega-Murillo dictatorship and were brutally repressed. In the middle of this year it was Puerto Rico's turn. But the qualitative change in the region came with the rebellion of Ecuadorian peasants and indigenous people.

It was followed by Haiti and now Chile, where a true revolution is tearing down the reactionary regime that the bourgeoisie has propped up since Pinochet's genocidal dictatorship. Obviously, the continent has entered into a dynamic that can infect workers and the youth in other countries at any time. Colombia, for example, has joined the rebellion with millions on the streets and a historic general strike; tensions are red hot in Central America, and political struggles and crises at the top of the establishment are developing in the rest of the region's countries. That is why even the mainstream bourgeois media warns about what they see as a new moment of unpredictable consequences.

CHILE, AN IMPRESSIVE REVOLUTION

"It's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years." This slogan summarizes the depth of the revolutionary process that began in Chile with the increase in the price of the metro, but which questions the Piñera government, the regime inherited from Pinochetism and, objectively, the semi-colonial capitalist system of this Andean country. From one day to the next, the role model proudly upheld by the most concentrated sectors of capital and right-wing formations across the continent flew up in the air. Macri's electoral defeat had left the Lima Group - Trump's spearhead in the region - battered; the Chilean revolution finished pushing it towards history's trash bin.

With the youth at the forefront, dragging the majority of the population behind them and forcing the bureaucratic leadership of the labor movement to call two historical general strikes, with mobilizations of millions of workers, youth and communities from one end to the other of Chile's geography, self-organizing in popular assemblies and councils, with barricades and pickets, bravely facing the repression of an army armed to the teeth, a dual power in the streets has been defeating each of the maneuvers with which the government and forces of the regime have tried to divert the process toward a controlled institutional exit from above.

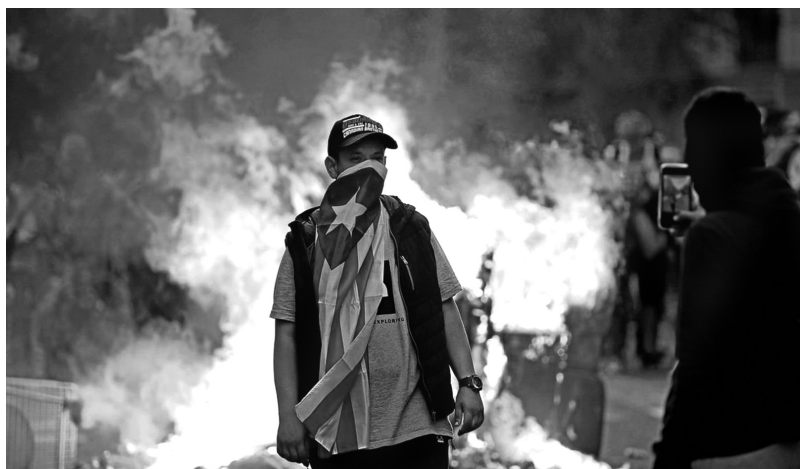
Currently, the spurious pact to try to save Piñera and whatever they can of the old Pinochet constitution, between the right that governs and the parliamentary opposition, including the Broad Front, which had promoted itself as a

renewal to the left of the old political caste, opens a new political moment. The rejection of this new and evident betrayal is causing an accelerated rupture of important sections of the population with all the formations of the institutional left, which will bolster the emergence of new leaders in the labor movement and the youth and will expand the political space in which a revolutionary organization like ours can be strengthened.

BOLIVIA IS PART OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAVE

Imperialism, the Latin American right and their scribes tried to take advantage of the fall of Evo Morales to counter the revolutionary wave that shakes Latin America. However, the situation quickly evolved into a confrontation of the mass movement against the coup's self-proclaimed government comparable to the rebellions that are shaking several governments in the world.

Beyond the opportunist debate among the most reactionary sectors that refuse to define what happened in Bolivia as a coup d'état because they support the interim government of the racist Jeanine Áñez, and the false progressives that are determined to point to an unreal fascist advance everywhere to try to scare the mass movement and advance their possibilist policy and position as the left wing of bourgeois-democratic regimes in the countries they govern or influence, there is a real debate on the left. Some groups refuse to define what happened as a coup and argue that Evo Morales was overthrown by a popular uprising. Others only recognize the action of the right wing coup and tend to hold an uncritical vision of Morales, to the point of proposing his reinstatement in power as the strategy to follow.



We do not agree with either of those points of view. In Bolivia, there were three moments that combined to reach the current situation. The perception, right or wrong, that the Evo Morales government committed fraud to avoid a second round that he would have most likely lost, initially produced an uprising of sectors of the middle class, the student body and various social movements that broke with the government because of its pro-capitalist conversion and hostility toward all sectors that opposed its austerity and pro-market policies. All of this also explains the initial passivity of the rest of the labor, peasant and indigenous movements and the statements of the leadership of the COB (Bolivian Workers' Central) and other movements asking Evo Morales to step aside.

After a couple of weeks, with Evo weakened and cornered by the uprising to the point that he accepted, first the OAS audit, and then a call for new elections - something that could have channeled the situation - the most recalcitrant right took advantage of the opportunity and decided to carry out the coup, first by inciting the confinement of the police and then convincing the army. Even in this second moment, the COB and the other social organizations, except for a minority sector led by the MAS (Movement for Socialism), remained on the sidelines or supported the departure of Morales. Isolated and without support, Evo resigned and went into exile. The coup was completed and, after several days of power vacuum, the government of the extreme right proclaimed itself. This generated a third moment, which we are witnessing now and whose final result is still in dispute: the mass

movement broke onto the scene again, forcing all the leaderships of the labor and indigenous movements to pronounce themselves against the new coup government "of the rich". This new uprising, completely different from the first, produced a unique front of sectors influenced by Morales' MAS and others, that make up a majority, which are critical of Morales but understand that they must defeat the coup plotters because, if these consolidate their power, they will be a dangerous enemy against workers and the indigenous movement.

Without recognizing these different moments and the complexity of the situation, it is not possible to adopt a correct policy to intervene in Bolivia. Today, revolutionaries have to stand with the mobilized people until overthrowing the self-proclaimed government, which is counterrevolutionary. That is the axis that articulates our program. At the same time, we should not give any support to Morales and the MAS, who are ultimately responsible for marginal sectors of the extreme right having reached the government. And now, when it is necessary to help isolate and defeat those coup leaders, they are promoting a negotiation with them, which constitutes a new betrayal. Our orientation must include the call to intensify the struggle until the dictatorship is overthrown and continue it until a government of the working class and peasant organizations is achieved, which would be the only one capable of applying the anti-capitalist measures that are essential to respond to the Bolivian population's needs.



THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE

There is a multiplicity of elements that explain why we have arrived at this new moment. In almost all the processes, the rejection of authoritarianism and the violation of democratic rights have been significant. But the determining factor has been the deepening of the global economic crisis and the consequences of the brutal austerity plans to pay debts and guarantee corporate profits that the different governments are applying. Stagnating and shrinking economies, obscene inequality, increasing unemployment, extreme job insecurity, deterioration of health care and education, inaccessible housing and the loss of any perspective for the future experienced by millions of young people around the world make up the explosive cocktail that begins to detonate and spread from one country to another.

Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the illusions created by the imperialist campaign that said capitalism would bring “prosperity and progress” have disappeared. The deterioration of people’s standard of living, the loss of social and labor conquests, the destruction of nature, the exacerbation of sexism and xenophobia, drives millions to begin identifying the capitalist system as the origin of their misfortunes. In unlikely places, such as the US or Great Britain, the youth is massively turning to the left and socialism.

The fall of Stalinism implied the collapse of the world order created by World War II. Without its counterrevolutionary associate, who played a key role in containing the workers and peoples of the world, American imperialism, far from strengthening - as different sectors of the left believed it would - began to concentrate all the world’s contradictions in its hands and to weaken. The 2008 debacle was a qualitative leap in its deterioration and forced it to intensify its policy of economic counterrevolution against the mass movement to save banks and corporations. Currently, we are heading towards a new crisis that reflects the decline of US imperialism and the capitalist system as a whole. The rebellions that we are witnessing are the working people’s response to the barbarism that capitalists are leading humanity towards in order to save the 1% they represent.

UNCONSCIOUS SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS¹

What we are witnessing in Latin America and the Middle East are profoundly anti-capitalist

rebellions and revolutions. Part of their objectives are democratic and that is why, in addition to opposing governments, they also confront the regimes and their utterly anti-democratic and repressive institutions. But they are not essentially democratic processes: the mobilizations, above all, pursue economic and social changes that are incompatible with the framework of capitalism in its current phase of decay. In that sense, they are anti-capitalist, socialist, but unconscious, revolutions. Because the level of consciousness of the masses, though rapidly advancing, is still a step behind their actions and there are no revolutionary leaderships at the head of the mobilization.

They are rebellions or popular revolutions. The working class participates and has a more active role in each process, but at first it does so individually, not organized, dissolved within the popular movement. The dynamic of events overpower and press the bureaucratic leaders and that is why they end up producing very powerful general strikes, like the two that have recently been carried out in Chile, the one in Colombia, those in some Arab countries or those being prepared in France and in other latitudes. Yet the working class has still not clearly become the leadership in any process.

The masses turn to direct action because they have learned that nothing is achieved by institutional means. The semi-insurrections that occur end up producing situations of dual power, but, because the working class has not taken the leadership of the processes, no organizations have emerged to institutionalize it. It is a *de facto* dual power, in the streets, due to the strength and radicalization that the mobilization acquires. Yes, assembly processes and open councils develop, and some traditional organizations take new forms, but they fall short of becoming organizations of power.

In almost all the processes, a young activism is emerging, which, by having nothing to lose and everything to gain, is radicalized, manages to surpass the conciliatory apparatuses and expose them. This



sector is clearly the vanguard of all the processes and the one that not only is not afraid of repression, but has broken with the petty-bourgeois prejudice of previous waves that defended nonviolence and refused to adopt tactics of self-defense against the repressive forces. The youth stamps an extraordinary dynamism on all the processes and generates sympathy among workers and other sectors that are mobilized.

THE POLITICS OF THE REVOLUTIONARIES

In this new world situation the slogan of a *free and sovereign Constituent Assembly* to reorganize everything in favor of workers and the people has become important in many countries. It is the most democratic instance that bourgeois democracy can offer and it serves to enhance the processes and expose treacherous leaderships, whether they refuse to take up the demand for fear of not being able to control it, or they are forced to do so and their refusal to take significant measures in favor of the majority is revealed.

The Constituent Assembly begins to be on the table when a political crisis opens the possibility of the fall of the government or begins to question reactionary regimes such as those of Chile, Spain and several Arab countries. When the mobilization is transformed into semi-insurrection and there are no dual power organizations, it is still very useful, though in this case, the call for the mass movement to impose it from below strengthens.

However, we cannot use it as our government slogan, like some leftist organizations mistakenly do, because even a Constituent Assembly convened in the most revolutionary period will be composed of a significant number of representatives of the bourgeoisie and reformists, who will most likely have a majority.

In times of political crisis and much more when revolutionary uprisings occur, our system of slogans must start by posing *Down with the government*. This slogan must be combined with *Constituent Assembly* and with a positive and class based solution to the problem of power: *that workers must govern*.

Our proposal for power will be abstract to the extent that dual power organizations do not arise. We must promote their emergence, support all forms of self-organization as embryonic as they may be - assemblies, councils, strike committees, etc. - and promote their coordination and centralization.

It may happen that old organizations like work place committees or unions become new types of organizations in the heat of the insurrection. We must pay attention to everything, because our policy has to be as concrete as possible in calling for workers and the people to govern through the most democratic organizations and more genuinely reflect the mood of the masses and their vanguard.

If the revolutionary left has representatives in Congress at a time when falls a government, there are no dual power organizations and a Constituent Assembly is called to discuss the presidential succession, we can propose propagandistically that the representatives of the left govern provisionally, to oppose the representatives of the bourgeoisie and propose the masses a class based and left wing alternative.

Only the emergence of workers' democratic and centralized organizations, like workers' councils (soviets), coordination committees, industrial *cordones* (factory committees of the 1971-3 Chilean revolution) or the like, make it possible in a revolutionary situation to oppose those organizations to the institutions of the bourgeoisie and call for them to take power. Unfortunately, in the processes that we are witnessing, one of the most important weaknesses is the absence of organizations with these characteristics.

Another orientation that we should adopt concerns self-defense. Since the emergence of the "yellow vests" and what we are witnessing in the current rebellions, a vanguard arises that is determined to confront repression. We must enthusiastically support the right of the masses to defend themselves and promote the formation of self-defense committees. In times of acute crisis, if there is organized self-defense and a correct policy, the creativity of the mass movement can divide, disorganize and defeat any army or police force, no matter how heavily armed.

The semi-insurrections that are taking place in different parts of the planet develop out of mass mobilizations, most of them self-organized, that grow day to day, with barricades and clashes during hours of repression. Along with actively participating, we must raise the need for a general strike and its continuity until defeating the government and the regime. We must fight to impose the movement's program, demand action from and denounce the union bureaucracy that will permanently try to contain the labor movement and prevent it from entering the process

in strength and end up leading and determining the situation in favor of its interests

THE PARTY AND THE ISL

Unlike what happened in the world between World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall, when several revolutionary uprisings ended up expropriating the bourgeoisie without the leadership of a revolutionary socialist party,² and in some cases without the working class at the vanguard, at this stage of the class struggle, due to the scandalous turn towards an unconditional defense of capitalism and the bourgeois democratic regime of all petty-bourgeois, reformist and philo-Stalinist leaderships, from the point of view of the subjects that we need to advance towards socialism, we are as in the first decades of last century. Specifically, without the working class as the vanguard of the mobilization and without a revolutionary socialist party with mass influence in the leadership, partial victories can be achieved, but it is impossible for a new socialist revolution to triumph.

At the same time, for the working class to end up transforming itself into the subject of the revolution, in addition to the mobilization that allows its consciousness to advance, a revolutionary party that can displace the bureaucracy and put an end to the influence of those who preach class conciliation and work consciously to prevent workers from taking power, is essential. For these reasons, the autonomist and anarchist currents that work against the construction of the revolutionary party play a reactionary role and we must confront them decisively.

The counterrevolutionary actions that Stalinist, social-democratic, neo-reformist, nationalist and populist currents are committing in the current rebellions, making agreements with the bourgeoisie to curb the revolutionary ascent or applying austerity and repressing where they govern, are revealing to millions around the world the need to build new political tools.

The new situation poses increasingly favorable conditions for the growth and strengthening of revolutionary organizations. Fearless youth, women who stand up for their rights and workers who organize general strikes are the raw material for building them.

Even the skeptics of the left, who until just yesterday proclaimed that it was the bourgeoisie that held a strategic control of the situation and that the world had turned to the right, now have to reluctantly accept that there has been a favorable change.

Those of us who formed the International Socialist League were convinced that the tensions that were accumulating over the years would reach a turning point like the one we are witnessing. All our national sections are at the front line of events. We invite you to join our organization. We need to grow more and more for a new society, free of exploitation or oppression of any kind, fraternal, egalitarian, truly democratic and socialist, to be each day closer to becoming a reality. ✊

1. See *The Transitional Program Today*, Theses XV, Nahuel Moreno.

2. These revolutions were carried out with nationalist Stalinist or petty-bourgeois opportunist leaderships and consequently degenerated into bureaucratic workers' states.





CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNDERSTAND A REVOLUTION

Chile HAS AWAKENED

"The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct intervention of the masses in historical events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business - kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own intervention the initial groundwork for a new régime. Whether this is good or bad we leave to the judgment of moralists. We ourselves will take the facts as they are given by the objective course of development. The history of a revolution is for us above all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny." (Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution)

■ JOAQUÍN ARANEDA, MOVIMIENTO ANTICAPITALISTA LEADER

**THE "OASIS" OF THE CONTINENT, THE GOLDEN DREAM
OF NEO-LIBERALISM, THE COUNTRY OF FREE TRADE
AGREEMENTS AND REPRESSION WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES,
STOOD UP ONE DAY.**

The Chilean people have brought back the times of industrial *cordones*¹ and the "socialist" experience from the far reaches of memory with a rebellious scream. With the violence of contained contradictions, the Chilean people decided once and for all to abandon the painful memory of past defeats, to end that

cycle and launch a new one that is still being written.

The secondary school students lit the fuse, organizing an evasion of the metro turnstiles against a new increase of the fares, which are already among the most expensive of the continent. They convened at the stations to jump over the barriers by the hundreds, inspiring thousands of workers who use those trains every day, thousands who use this service to reach health care centers that charge them for a poor service, thousands who use it to study at universities that

indebt them for years and years, thousands who, despite having worked their entire lives, lack a pension with which to live with dignity.

The metro stations of that “Friday of fury” concentrated and expanded all the contradictions of a model that abandoned millions of Chileans during long years, then the evasion became massive. And the Piñera government’s “normal” response of violent repression triggered widespread outrage and popular revolt.

FOUR WEEKS TO CHANGE 30 YEARS

The first week was marked by clashes, barricades and *cacerolazos*²: a response to the violent state repression. The process quickly gained strength and a massive tide of people flooded the streets. The general strike brought strength and confidence to the protests and forced the government to apologize for its “lack of vision” and begin a shift in how it was dealing with the situation.

The second week, daily mobilizations with massive turnouts took over the streets and the government was forced to withdraw the state of emergency and curfew it had decreed. As a counterpart to that retreat, bourgeois institutional forces dove into frantic parliamentary negotiations to attempt “agreements” to deactivate the process. That is when they announced social measures and the voting of laws that had been blocked until that moment, such as the 40-hour work week. It is fair to say that these attempts were in vain: far from deactivating the revolution, they extended it nationally and images from across the country confirmed its historical character.

The third week added a very important element: the emergence of embryonic organizations of self-organization and debate. Assemblies, councils and strike committees arose north and south throughout the country, centered in Santiago. Plaza Italia had already become Plaza de la Dignidad (Dignity Square). The announcement by a collective of unions, led by the port workers, to convene a new general strike on November 12 put the regime on guard, and it returned to its repressive speech, announcing tougher persecution against hooded protestors and those who made barricades. Again, like all previous attempts, it failed.

The fourth week, no doubt, saw the process take a leap forward. The strength of the general strike was evident, completely paralyzing the activities of an already shaken country. That strike and the massive

national mobilization that accompanied it, forced the government to take heed of the demand for constitutional change. At a press conference, Piñera practically begged the rest of the regime’s forces to negotiate a pact, which they ended up sealing with the Broad Front (FA), the Communist Party (PC) and other forces. But the pact is strongly rejected by the rank-and-file and has even produced divisions in the forces that subscribe to it.

Despite all this, the process is far from over and, in the next few weeks, many debates will develop about how to carry on.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REVOLUTION

A semi-insurrection³ broke out in Chile that brought out the most extreme aspects of the class struggle, which are veiled most of the time, and exposed them brutally. The action of the masses quickly identified the government and the entire regime as responsible for 30 years of plunder, repression and impunity.

The popular and spontaneous nature of the uprising does not contradict the important and even “defining” participation of the working class through two general strikes and the organization of grassroots strike committees. In addition, a huge vanguard of the youth has confronted the repressive forces from the start, awakening the sympathy of broad sectors of the population and, as a counterpart, a massive rejection of institutions that had played a prominent role in the regime, such as the Police and the Army.

The uprising occurred in Santiago and we could say that the “ex” Plaza Italia, today Plaza de la Dignidad, became its icon. But it soon spread to other regions, infecting the entire country. Concepción, Valparaíso, Valdivia, Punta Arenas, Antofagasta and every square, main avenue and





neighborhood in Chile has become an arena of mobilizations and confrontations with the Army and the Police. And then came the emergence of centers of self-organization and deliberation.

The motivations for the uprising, the fuel of the revolution, lay in the 30 years of a regime created by the dictatorship and supported by successive “democratic” governments (see “The “Transition” Pact Between Pinochet and the Concertación”), that plunged workers, the youth and the Chilean people into misery and inequality. What the parties and institutions struggled to sustain during 30 years, the

mobilized people turned upside down in a few days, revealing to the entire world that capitalism has no “oasis”, but a decline that is expressed with greater strength every day.

Over the passing weeks, a non-institutionalized dual power developed, with embryonic organizations of deliberation that laid the foundations of a “program” of the revolution that contemplates social, economic and democratic demands with anti-capitalist characteristics, passing over the institutional order and challenging each of the government’s “orders” and threats.

The 1970s Chilean Revolution and the Failure of the “Peaceful Road”

On September 4, 1970, Popular Unity (UP), composed of the Socialist Party (PS), the Communist Party (PC) and other minor formations like the Radical Party, the MAPU and API, won the elections, catapulting socialist leader Salvador Allende to the presidency: he obtained 36.63% of the votes and was appointed by Congress from between the two most voted candidates.

The UP government developed amidst a revolutionary process of the Chilean people. The former presidency of Christian Democrat Frei was shaken by numerous workers’ struggles against his austerity plans and important marches for an educational reform of a student movement deeply influenced by the Cuban revolution. A great revolution that questioned the country’s capitalist bases developed in Chile in the early 1970s.

The Allende government, which received political support from Fidel Castro and favored the “peaceful road to socialism” and a “gradual” process negotiated with the bourgeoisie, was pressed by the revolutionary workers and popular mobilizations to

take a series of progressive measures that, though not breaking with the capitalist economy, confronted US imperialism and big business. Among them, the nationalization of copper and mining, along with many companies, the expansion of agrarian reform and a significant increase in wages.

The fighting masses took every opportunity to take control of factories, mechanisms of distribution and organization, which provoked a strong reaction from the right that tried several times to liquidate the revolutionary process. The employers’ strike of October 1972, which managed to paralyze the country for three weeks, produced a strong radicalization and gave rise to the industrial *cordones*: a workers’ organization that broke with the shackles of the PC led CUT and developed important experiences of dual power.

Allende, instead of relying on the growing force of the revolution, faced the crisis by putting together a cabinet of “loyal” and “democratic” military officers who, with General Prats at the helm, governed Chile until the 1973 elections. The UP government

Another important characteristic is the absence of a clear leadership and much less of any political force with hegemony over representation of the movement, which facilitates the conditions to develop a revolutionary current, on the condition of merging with the dozens and dozens of “natural cadres” that are forging their political experience in the heat of the struggle. The *cabros* and *cabras*, the *capuchas*⁴; the youth and social collectives dominate the political leadership of the movement by far.

Although the working class does not clearly act as such in the mobilization process - and this is a weakness - it was the protagonist of two general strikes, and some union sectors stood out for pressing in favor of the struggle. In this regard, port workers and a sector of the miners were at the vanguard against the conciliatory and demobilizing attitude of the CUT (Workers’ United Center) leadership.

The absence of a revolutionary leadership with mass influence is another weakness, perhaps the most significant one, of the revolution in Chile, and the main challenge to overcome.

These weaknesses, in addition to the decidedly treacherous actions of all political forces with

parliamentary representation and those that lead the unions, explain why, despite having a 91% disapproval rating, Piñera has not yet resigned.

POWER AGAINST POWER

The assemblies, councils and, above all, the massive and sustained mobilization, constitute a true non-institutionalized power that questions the power of the bourgeoisie and its parties. The government’s measures and announcements and all its repressive attempts have failed to deactivate this force, which causes the regime’s “instability”. They are not “foreign interventions” or “aliens”, as they say in La Moneda (presidential palace).

Contrary to what some currents that seek to “*achieve what they can, taking advantage of the struggle*” hold, the vast majority of the mass movement is not motivated by this or that specific demand, but by their weariness with the life they have been subjected to for decades. They have identified those responsible for this crisis and therefore trust no one, not the government, nor Congress or the armed forces.

The political tasks posed by this revolution, the “fuel” that we referred to, seek its



confronted and antagonized the experiences of self-organization, accusing them of rushing the process and not allowing negotiations with different bourgeois sectors, Christian Democracy (DC) and the military.

In the parliamentary elections of March 1973, the UP increased its vote to 43.4%. The government squandered this new support of the Chilean people, and the DC, the right-wing parties, together with the Chilean bourgeoisie, with full support of US imperialism, conspired with the armed forces and prepared to overthrow the government. Their first attempt, the “*tancazo*” of June 29, was defeated. In immediate response, a popular mobilization in support the UP government brought together more than one million workers in Santiago.

Far from organizing that enormous force and relying on the industrial *cordones* to organize a resistance and divide the bases of the armed forces and Carabineros, Allende, following the policy of the PC and the PS, surrounded himself with “loyal” military leaders and appointed a second military cabinet. At the same time, he implemented a gun control law, which, with the excuse of controlling the right-wing armament, was actually used to control and suppress the armed self-defense of the factories and neighborhoods. He abandoned the sailors of Talcahuano and Valparaíso, who had faced and defeated their coup plotting officers.

Finally, on September 11, 1973, there was a bloody coup d’état headed by General Pinochet after which more than 3,000 people were murdered, more than 35,000 prisoners were brutally tortured from a total of 300,000 that were detained, and a similar figure was forced into exile. It was the defeat and physical disappearance of a large part of the Chilean revolutionary vanguard. None of the important organizations of the left or the ultra-leftist MIR lived up to the tasks demanded by the times. There lacked a revolutionary alternative that, like the Bolsheviks in Russia, could have led the revolution to victory. 🌱



organizational forms in the wake of the betrayal of the old - and not so old - leaderships, and sprouts on street corners and parks, in schools and universities. There, everything is discussed, creating new forms in the absence of others or against the boycott of traditional leaderships. Yet, after a month of uninterrupted mobilization, these forms fail to institutionalize as a clearly defined dual power.

At these centers of self-organization, the important debates for the future of the struggle are

held, such as the need to sustain the mobilization until the Piñera government falls, to set up a Constituent Assembly to reorganize the country on new bases and also to build a new government, this time not of the bosses, but of the workers and the people. Another fundamental debate is about the need to organize self-defense mechanisms against the repression to strike against the fundamental pillar of the political regime: its armed forces. In addition to these central tasks, there is a discussion about the set of political, economic and social measures that are needed to lay the foundations for a different Chile, diametrically opposed to the capitalist disaster that has collapsed.

THE GOVERNMENT, INSTITUTIONS AND PARTIES

The first response of the Piñera government, as we said, consisted of repression and the announcement of an alleged “war against a very powerful enemy.” The images of the president surrounded by military men, the state of

The “Transition” Pact of Pinochet and the Concertación

Preparing an exit that would allow the regime to survive, preserve large quotas of power and continue to sustain the ultra-liberal economic model that the Chicago Boys¹ inaugurated, Pinochet decreed a new Constitution in 1980. It survives to date with 25 changes, and it provided that Pinochet remain in power until 1988, when a plebiscite was held to decide if he would remain as president for a similar period.

Among the central characteristics of that Constitution, aimed at preserving the regime’s main Bonapartist² features were: 1) the election of the president with broad powers for eight years; 2) a National Security Council composed of commanders in chief with control over the president and Congress; 3) a Constitutional Court that could apply political-ideological proscriptions against organizations and individuals, dismiss senators or deputies, and whose members would be appointed by the dictatorship’s Supreme Court; 4) a Congress with a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate, whose members would be elected biannually and included nine lifelong senators appointed by the dictatorship, who would legislate alongside another 26 senators elected by the people; 5) a complicated mechanism of constitutional reform.

The Struggles of 1983 to 1986 Pushed Pinochet to the Edge of the Abyss

The collapse of the dictatorships of Argentina and Bolivia, plus the crisis that struck Brazil and Uruguay, had an impact on the Chilean situation. In 1982, the economic plan of the dictatorship entered into crisis and there were student and construction worker struggles. On May 11, 1983, the Chilean people massively took to the streets and initiated a cycle of powerful protests and national strikes in 1984 and 1986 that, with barricades, fires and street battles, reached semi-insurrection levels.

Faced with the certain danger of the fall of the regime, imperialism and the Church pressured Pinochet into opening a negotiated political exit. Opposition parties were a key piece of that plan. The Christian Democratic Party (DC), which had supported the coup and later passed to the opposition, along with the Socialist Party (PS), acted to divert the mobilizations toward the terrain of negotiation and a possible electoral exit. The Communist Party (PC), with a strong influence in the labor movement and protests, instead of orienting them toward ousting Pinochet, supported the

emergency and the curfew were the concrete expression of his statements, as well as the application of the “anti-terrorism” law to judge thousands of detainees.

Piñera’s speech began to change near the end of the first week. With the military still deployed in the streets and allegations of torture centers installed in the metro stations, the government apologized for its “lack of vision” and announced the cancellation of the metro fare hike. After the “biggest march in history,” he announced a package of social measures, the end of the state of emergency and ended up asking for the resignation of his entire cabinet, including Andrés Chadwick, Minister of the Interior and Public Security, Piñera’s cousin and iron fist of the regime, with an active participation in the dictatorship and a central role in Piñera’s government.

None of these measures managed to divert attention from Piñera and his government,

identified by the great majority of the people as the great culprits of the disaster. Amid scandals and heated debates, Congress also showed its willingness to sustain the institutional order in the worst moments of the crisis. It promoted initiatives that had been shelved, like the reduction of working hours, seeking to divert the mobilization towards institutional channels. The most “radical” sectors of Parliament did not deviate from those maneuvers at any time.

It is worth highlighting that the parties of the former New Majority (PC and Socialist Party - PS) and the “progressive” FA (see “The Defenders of the Capitalist Institutional Order”) worked to dismantle the process of mobilization. When people occupied the streets asking Piñera to resign, these parties “mounted” themselves on the process to try to lead it. First they presented a constitutional accusation against the president, then they talked about convening a plebiscite for a Constituent Assembly and, after the renewal of ministers, they ended up sealing a pact with Piñera. That is, in the moment of greatest



negotiation strategy, calling for confidence in a sector of the armed forces.

A Reform to Ensure Continuity

Cornered by the crisis and mobilizations, using the breathing space provided by the capitulation of the traitorous leaderships, Pinochet launched the 1988 plebiscite. But the result was a victory of the Chilean people: the “No” won and Pinochet was forced to call elections. The Concertación (Agreement) of parties for the “No”, integrated by the DC, the PS, the Party for Democracy (PPD) and the Radical Social Democratic Party (PRSD) was preparing for an orderly transition, coordinated with Pinochet, accepting his undemocratic Constitution and only proposing partial reforms. Despite its initial criticism, the PC finally called for a “No” vote and supported that policy.

The elections were won by the Concertación and Patricio Aylwin (DC) assumed the presidency in 1990. The genocide Pinochet maintained his position as head of the armed forces and in 1998 retired with the position of lifelong senator, which he maintained until his death.

The governments of the Concertación and then the New Majority (Aylwin, Frei, Lagos, Bachelet), who have been guarantors of this regime of “supervised democracy” and an ultra-neo-liberal model, took turns in power and did not hesitate to unleash the repressive force of the State against popular struggles. They did so against workers’ protests, against students and their “penguin revolution” and against the feminist actions that have confronted this regime and its “pacos” during these 30 years. The PC from coalition governments and the new Broad Front from the opposition, have been supporters of the mechanisms of this regime inherited from Pinochet. 🐧

1. A denomination that emerged in the 70’s and refers to the liberal economists educated at the University of Chicago, who have a strong influence on the Pinochet dictatorship.

2. An authoritarian political regime that totally or partially suppresses democratic freedoms. Based on the military and police apparatus, it is usually centered on an individual, is at the service of the exploiting class and stands as an arbitrator between the different sectors of society.



democratization, with millions on the streets taking “rulership over their own destinies” into their hands, these paper thin democrats made every effort to resolve the crisis in a pact between leaders.

The revolution exposed, as it always does,

not only the most violent face of capital and its political managers but also the true face of the apparatuses that call themselves progressive and their local and international cheerleaders.

The Role of the Armed Forces

In 1973, the coup commanded by Pinochet destroyed an important experience of organization and struggle of the working class and the people. Though something similar occurred in most of the countries in the continent, the Chilean armed forces and its commanders were characterized by their close ties to the most concentrated sectors of the economy and the violence they unleashed against the workers and the people. The end of this process, though involving some convulsions, was negotiated and led by those same elites, guaranteeing the armed forces a central role in politics until today.

After the Massacre, a Guarantee of Impunity

The Chilean bourgeoisie and its parties played a central role in the rescue of the armed forces and their permanence as a central institution of the new regime, perhaps the main one, since the high command was not only provided with the control

of the forces themselves, but also with spaces of representation in the rest of the institutions. Pinochet himself remained as head of the Army until March 10, 1998, and the next day he assumed as lifelong senator and was never tried for his crimes. The few that were convicted for the crimes of the dictatorship reside in special prisons built by the Concertación, actually retirement hotels with full freedom of internal action.

The continued brutality of the governments of the Concertación classified the files of the dictatorship, providing minor reparations through poor reports on Truth and Justice: a framework at the service of maintaining the repressive forces of the State built under Pinochet - both in the intelligence apparatus (CNI) and in all branches of the army - intact. Some years ago, it was revealed that about 1200 CNI agents were assimilated into the army in 1990.

To complement this “supervised democracy”, the armed forces were provided with independent

GENERAL STRIKE AND MOBILIZATION VERSUS PACT WITH THE RIGHT

The government's attempts to dismantle the process found privileged partners in the FA and PC leaderships, and in all the regime's forces at different levels. Perhaps the event that ended up provoking this unity was the powerful general strike of November 12, which was convened against the will of most leaderships, driven, above all, by the port workers, but which managed to drag along the Social Unity front (FA and PC) and the mass of the mobilized people in an action that pushed the government to the brink. Far from pushing it over the cliff, these leaders rescued the government by accepting the pact that Piñera proposed, which includes an exhausting and totally bureaucratic process to "transform the Constitution", in fact granting the resolution of the issue to the very forces that the vast majority of the population rejects.

As we pointed out in our November 15 flyer: *"The Christian Democrats (DC), the PC and the FA started working with that purpose: to make a pact with the right. The backdrop of this development was the great strength that the general strike displayed, which fueled*

a historical productive strike and opened the possibility of aiming for the full objective: a constituent assembly without the oversight of current political powers. This context accelerated the "pact" that the right and the "opposition" have signed behind the people's backs:

** A plebiscite in April 2020 to ask what the people have already shouted in the streets ("New Constitution") without the option of a "Constituent Assembly", as an obvious concession to the most reactionary government.*

** But that's not all: the operating mechanism to change the Constitution, in addition, empowers the right to obstruct all changes that question its class privileges. It establishes the requirement of 2/3 of the members of the "Convention" to pass any law. This way, with 1/3, the right can block any progress and, therefore, everything has to be agreed by consensus.*

** The election of "convention delegates" will take place in October 2020 under the same current electoral system that gives priority to traditional parties.*

This is what we have been warning about for weeks: with Piñera and his accomplices, the constitutional process that we demand as a people will not come to be."

This downright betrayal against the revolution is a repeat of the transition that allowed the dictatorship to leave behind a solid regime that the forces of "democracy" have been responsible



financing from the control and administration of a percentage of the copper and mining budget: 10% of state-owned Codelco. That scheme was modified gradually just last August.

The Guardians of the "Oasis"

This permanence of military's central involvement in "democratic" life and the prominent role of Carabineros and its different Special Forces in the internal repression of labor conflicts, the Mapuche people and the youth explains the stability that the model enjoyed for many years. The armed forces' repressive role was highly esteemed due to the

ideological and material action of the bourgeoisie and because they had never been effectively defeated by the mass movement.

That is why it is not insignificant that during the development of the current revolutionary process, with the active participation of the army in the repression and even the conformation of the COSENA¹ to give the armed forces repressive leadership², the mobilization response remains massive and defiant, especially that of the youth that confronted the military during the state of emergency and continue to clash with the Carabineros' Special Forces.

Precisely because of the role they have played since the dictatorship, the defeat of the armed forces has become one of the key tasks of the Chilean revolution and, to achieve this, in addition to mobilizing, it is necessary to raise the debate about the necessary self-defense in the mass organizations that begin to emerge throughout the country. 🐞

1. National Security Council.

2. To date, more than 23 people have been killed, thousands have been injured and tortured, and hundreds of protesters have suffered eye injuries from bullets or buckshot fired by the "pacos".

for sustaining. But it does not come without a cost to its perpetrators: the collapsing of expectation and support for the FA is also expressed in new divisions between its components, and even within each party that integrates the front. It should be noted that, while the Pinochet transition was mounted on the basis of a brutal defeat of the masses, in this case we experience a process of ascent and revolution. Their institutional adaptation, their skepticism in the mass movement and their respect for the limits of capital make these supposed “renovators” of politics one of the most conservative forces in a process that has made the conscience of hundreds of thousands advance.

THE ANTICAPITALIST MOVEMENT AND THE ISL IN THE TEST OF REVOLUTION

Those of us who write these lines do not observe the facts from a neutral position: we participate with all our forces, contributing opinions and promoting the mobilization and emergence of assembly centers in political

struggle against the treacherous and reformist leaderships. And we do not do this alone: along with us, the International Socialist League carries the flag of the Chilean revolution across the world to surround it with solidarity.

Unlike those who were surprised by the course of events, we held an analysis that took up the enormous student marches against the privatization of education, the feminist tide that saw our continent at its vanguard, the massive mobilizations for No + AFP (private social security), the port strikes and other events that indicated an accumulation of contradictions that the “Chilean model” could not endure for much longer.

That framework allowed us from the outset to assume that we were facing a historic change in our country and to respond with revolutionary politics. We tirelessly faced the state of emergency and the curfew alongside the mobilized people. We proposed what people in the streets chanted from the beginning, *Piñera must go*, as a central slogan, adding the need for a Constituent Assembly to reorganize the country on new bases,

The Real Chilean Model

Capitalist Inequality and Rapine

Chile was presented, until a few days ago, as one of the “stars” of the bourgeoisie and imperialism globally. Not only because of its political and economic stability, but mainly because it was founded on a brutal defeat of the labor and mass movement by the dictatorship, and continued by the “democratic” governments. The objective of these lines is to briefly expose the characteristics of this model that is now questioned in a massive and forceful way.

Pinochet and the Chicago Boys

Although the dictatorship began in 1973, it was in 1975 when a group of organic intellectuals from the Chilean elite took over the radical project of reactionary transformation of the model. The Chicago Boys, a select group of students from the Catholic University of Chile who continued their economic training at the University of Chicago to nurture the liberal orthodoxy of ideologues like Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek, dictated the doctrinal guidelines.

They put themselves at the head of the country’s economic and social project due to their direct relationship to the military power of the bourgeois

elite, and to their possession of a solid road map for big business. Its foundation was Chile’s high deficit and inflation. The imperialist intrusion presented its first layer of new cadres under the guise of “apolitical technocrats” to reorient the continent towards American interests: a mold of interference that began with military financing and continued with the imposition of the neoliberal laboratory.

The path of Chile’s reformulation under the dictatorship was radical in the pattern of capitalist accumulation, reconfiguring the role of the state and implementing complete financial liberalization, deregulation of the market and transferring state enterprises to private capitals. That section included tax reforms and incentives for foreign investment, dismantling the perspective of development that had prevailed in the previous decades. A true “capitalist revolution” that needed authoritarianism to constitute a subsidiary state, impose neo-liberalism and perpetuate itself under the 1980 Constitution still in effect.

“Democracy” to Continue Looting

After the general reconfiguration that the dictatorship

because what was beginning to break was the regime inherited from the dictatorship and not just a nefarious government.

Against the leaderships that advocated trust in the institutions, we called for strengthening self-organization and democratic debate at the grassroots, defending mobilizations and general strikes articulated from the bottom up as the only guarantees for victory, and rejecting the pact that was sealed behind the people's backs.

Finally, we also pointed out that this process has a task that has been expressed negatively, but whose materialization would allow a qualitative leap: the conquest of a government of those who have never ruled, the workers and the oppressed, for this uprising against the forces of the bourgeoisie to find a revolutionary exit.

It is for all these reasons that our political and organizational actions have been and are

articulated by the task of building a strong revolutionary current, born out of the process; and for that reason we coordinate actions, participate in assemblies and mobilize, proposing to the youth, workers, women and the people of Chile to turn this challenge into a reality together.

If, as Trotsky wrote a century ago, "*the most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historical events*," then building a political alternative of the insurgent masses is the fundamental task of the revolution that we are experiencing and we will work for it with all our strength. 🐞

1. Workers' councils organized during the 1970s revolutionary process in Chile.
2. Protests of people banging pots and pans.
3. Marxist term to describe an insurrectionary process, of anti-capitalist characteristics but without a revolutionary leadership, like what we are seeing in Chile.
4. *Cabro / cabra* is a common Chilean slang term for "young person". *Capuchas* refers to the hooded protesters of the front lines against the repression.



led, a second wave of privatization came in the 90s: a process of consolidation of the model whose correlation was absolute impunity. The brutality of the pact is measured by the fact that the dictator himself continued as head of the armed forces until 1998 and was then lifelong senator.

The result of this process is the creation of one of the most unequal countries in the region and the world, in which 1% of the population concentrates 33% of the wealth, the minimum wage is 301 thousand pesos (USD 423) per month while, according to the National Statistics Institute of Chile, half of all workers receive a salary equal to or less than 400 thousand pesos (USD 562) per month. The average price of (non-generic) drugs is USD 28.5, the highest in the region according to a study by a US consultant.¹ Studying a university degree costs about USD 25,000 and access to health care about USD 50 for the simplest visits.

In the case of pensions for retired workers who

contributed 30 to 35 years, 50% receive pensions of less than 296,332 pesos (USD 400): less than the minimum wage.²

The increase in the metro fare that triggered the rebellion meant that a worker would spend about 10% of his monthly salary just to get to and from work.

*"This model, praised by all capitalists and right-wing parties for years, from the get go, destroyed all probability of industrialization of the country, which today produces practically nothing except raw materials and agricultural products, wine and industrial fishing of salmon in the south in the hands of multinationals."*³

This is the model that has now crashed against the popular mobilization that had already been expressed "sector by sector" with student protests, the feminist tide, the fight against the AFPs and the huge strikes of port workers and teachers. That moment has passed: the enemy has been identified by workers and the people, and they are prepared to do anything to defeat him and pave the way to a new Chile. 🐞

1. IMS Health, in BBC Mundo, News of Latin America, 10/29/19.
2. theclinic.cl, 07/30/19. According to a study by the SOL Foundation, 50% of new retirees received a self-funded pension of less than 48 thousand pesos.
3. "El derrumbe del modelo chileno", Alternativa Socialista N° 747 (Argentina).

A NEW STAGE IN CHILE

The Need For a NEW ANTI-CAPITALIST LEFT

■ MARIANO ROSA

THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN THE COUNTRY IS ENTERING A NEW MOMENT. THE ENORMOUS ACTIVISM THAT CARRIED OUT THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS AND ITS PERSPECTIVES. ON WHAT BASIS TO BUILD A NEW PROJECT OF THE CHILEAN LEFT.

The pact signed or endorsed by the entire parliamentary opposition and the ruling right wing shifts contradictions to the electoral level.

The role of the parliamentary left: a historical ratification of its position. Revolutions put politics to the test. In 1970-73, in Chile,

the Socialist Party (PS) and the Communist Party (PC) acted as the firefighters against the industrial *cordones* and the popular self-organization of the Supply Boards. They opposed the Congress and conciliation with the bourgeoisie to the independent self-determination of the masses. The MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement), from an ultra-left perspective, did not contribute either: against the genuine organizations of the working class, they opposed their artificial “communal commandos”, diluting workers within “popular” spaces at the service of the accumulation of their

own apparatus. In the 1990 transition, the PS and the PC again activated a global agreement with the bourgeoisie and Pinochetism to guarantee impunity for the fascists and sustain neoliberal capitalism. That is how we got here.

Today, in 2019, faced with an impressive mass action that questions everything, that raises *Piñera must go* and *Constituent Assembly* as a way to change the bases of capitalist Chile, it is the Broad Front (FA) and again the PC, that save the lives of the Chilean political regime and bourgeoisie. But there is a gigantic reserve in the base of the process: in the youth for sure, and in the feminist movement, in the neighborhoods, and also in the working class. All the aspirations that mobilized that social bloc will be disappointed by a limited process of reforms carried out in collaboration with the right and the army.

Our forecast shows that we have to prepare for more class struggle, processes of political rupture and crises in Chile. In fact, a few hours after signing the agreement “for peace”, the FA is splitting and there are debates in the rank-and-file of the PC youth. The reformist and bureaucratic apparatuses creak, because Chile has changed and embarks on a new history.

BREAKING WITH “CARABINERO” DEMOCRACY AND NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM

Beyond the pacts, the vitality of the process of struggle and the demands that caused it are still there, intact. Our hypothesis is that the agreement signed by all the traditional parties,

which includes the Pinochetist right, will prevent the changes required to respond to the social demands that triggered the revolution from taking place. These are:

- No more AFP (private social security companies), and their replacement by a solidarity based social security system. This implies declaring the funds of the AFP companies of public utility and subject to expropriation without compensation.
- Free, universal and quality public education. Guaranteeing this means forgiving debts, expropriating banks that commercialize education and eliminating all state subsidies to the capitalist business of private education.
- No more job precariousness, distribution of work hours to ensure full employment and reduce the workday to 6 hours, with salaries equal to the real cost of living and automatically adjusted to real inflation. To ensure these rights, capitalist profitability, the parasitic appropriation of labor, must be abolished.
- The integral agenda of the feminist movement: legal abortion, gender violence law and budget, Integral Sex Education with a gender perspective. That is, to eradicate all economic and political privileges of the clerical-patriarchal lobby.
- Trial and punishment of the assassins of yesterday and today. Dismantling of the entire Pinochetist apparatus of repression



and espionage. This requires creating a truly independent investigative commission, with organizations of families of the victims, human rights organizations and public figures independent of the old regime; as well as declassifying the archives of the dictatorship and contributing to ending all impunity.

- For a new model economic development, independent of corporations and their rapine and dispossession; free of logging and mega-mining, compatible with nature. This implies a profound change: expropriating big capital and planning production with the intervention of the working class.
- For the right to self-determination of native peoples. Demilitarization of their territories and recognition of their historical demands.

This implies a plurinational Chile, and the expropriation of loggers and landowners.

- Dismantling of “carabinero” democracy, of privileges and repression. Abolition of the Senate, replacing it with a unicameral system with elective, recallable posts and salaries equivalent to that of a skilled worker. Mandatory use of public services by all elected representatives.
- Cancellation of all Free Trade Agreements and other agreements of submission to imperialism. For an internationalist policy of solidarity cooperation with the peoples of the region and the world.

As you can see, the set of demands that the revolution raised in Chile has an answer, it has a way out. However, it necessarily implies an

The Debates Posed by the Revolution

Piñera Must Go, Constituent Assembly and Workers' Government

■ MAURA GÁLVEZ, MOVIMIENTO ANTICAPITALISTA LEADER

The dynamic of the revolution shakes the pillars of the established regime and places new forms of political organization that were, until recently, limited to the circles of the most politicized vanguard, within the reach of the masses. We present here some debates about the fundamental slogans of the Chilean process and the politics of revolutionaries.

A Strengthened Right or Polarization and Crisis

A few months ago, our current, the ISL, affirmed: *“the international situation is marked by the crisis of the imperialist capitalist system. Its decadence is visible both in the central and the peripheral countries. In most of them there are strong social polarizations, with political phenomena to the right and to the left, with an important imperialist economic counter-offensive that attacks the living conditions of hundreds of millions in all continents, and an important response of workers, women’s, youth and popular struggles, with logical inequalities around the world”*.¹

On the other hand, other currents that claim to be Trotskyist emphasize the strengthening right wing forces, in what amounts to a superstructure-reductionist and not so Marxist analysis of the class struggle at an international level. For example, the Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) advanced in its path

of assimilation to reformist formations, even maintaining that the historical *era* changed in the world and therefore it is necessary to adapt political organizations to a non-revolutionary era.²

Other currents, like the one promoted by the PTR in Chile (PTS of Argentina) or the Argentine PO, have held similar points of view, guided by skepticism and attributing to bourgeois forces a power that even they do not recognize themselves.

The revolution that shakes Chile and the multiplicity of processes that occur worldwide clearly debunk these interpretations.

The Left, Between Pessimism and Adaptation to Reformism

In this international framework, some of the international Trotskyist currents that intervene in Chile have once again demonstrated the level of political and conceptual crisis that afflicts them. The same can be said of other political tendencies that limit and adapt their positions. The LIT, for example, explains in a long article that *“the Constituent Assembly is a trap and is useless”*,³ ignoring the hundreds of thousands who fight in the streets to impose it. Even worse is the position held by the USFI currents, which directly defend the Broad Front (FA) as a political model.

anti-capitalist confrontation and a transition to a different, socialist, economy and a different political model: a real democracy of the working class and the people.

NEITHER CAPITALISM WITH A HUMAN FACE NOR “RADICALIZING DEMOCRACY”: A NEW SYSTEM, A NEW POLITICAL FORCE

The dynamic that we explained above, between the demands of the struggle and the measures needed to satisfy them, leads to a necessary conclusion: there is no possible margin in this stage of capitalism - in Chile or anywhere - for positive reforms to ensure durable rights. Capital seeks to

overcome its crisis by exploiting the working class and nature ever more: it is an intrinsic law. And far from expanding democracy, it restricts it, repressing the masses that defend their rights in order to ensure its profits. That is why capital, more than ever, tends towards dispossession, depredation and authoritarianism.

The pact consummated in Chile by all the traditional forces is based on the false illusions that the FA and the PC hold, according to which a “*social capitalism with a human face*” is possible, and we must “*radicalize democracy to better fight against neo-liberalism.*” They are justifying ideologies that uphold a strategy: to be left-wing political forces within the framework of capitalism and its institutions. This conception leads them to reconcile with the right, make pacts with the bourgeoisie and finally



Thus, the Brazilian MES praises the FA as having “*the pronouncements that are most connected with the street*”,⁴ when that sector’s main activity - along with the Communist Party (PC) - has centered on attempting to institutionalize the process through the channels of the regime inherited from the dictatorship and signing a pact with the murderous government of Piñera, rescuing him when he was on the edge of the abyss. This policy is costing them an extended process of leaders and militants throughout the country splitting from the organization, with the resignation of Valparaíso mayor Sharp standing out.

Among Chilean political tendencies, the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement) maintains an ideological influence over new organizations that claim its inheritance. This is the case of Convergencia April 2, which questions the centrality of the *Piñera must go* slogan in an article that presents its politics: “*It is better to demand the resignation or approve the removal of a President than to eliminate his privileges. Nonetheless, a condition for the approval of a Constituent Assembly implies the resignation of Sebastián Piñera, and new presidential and parliamentary elections must be called ... This process of the Popular Constituent Assembly*

must also serve to enhance the struggle against the power bloc, which is taking place from the streets and could also take place in a Constitutional Plurinational Assembly that gives rise to a new constitutional text.”⁵ This demand to renew the president by electoral means, confirms its stagist separation from the revolution, which is a consequence of the separation they express in the struggle for the power of the centers of self-organization that arise from the process. It is a policy of abstention without disputing the leadership, which contributes to the recovery of the current bourgeois regime.

As always, the revolution exposes those who call themselves revolutionaries to the hard test of events. Some, beyond their red facade, demonstrate their enormous inability to understand the current political moment, not only in Chile but throughout the world; others choose the path of reformist adaptation. Both phenomena are explained by the profound skepticism of these currents, which contrasts with the initiative and audacity of the ISL throughout the world. 🐞

1. Nuestra estrategia para la revolución socialista, foundational document of the ISL, approved in Barcelona in May, 2019.
2. “Nueva época, nuevo programa, nuevo partido: este tríptico debía constituir el marco de una reflexión sobre el nuevo período histórico», From the LCR to the NPA, 15/12/08, signed by the USFI’s main leaders.
3. Asamblea Constituyente: ¿solución o trampa?, litci.org, 1/11/19.
4. Chile: el paraíso neoliberal en llamas, portaldelaizquierda.com, 29/10/19.
5. A tres semanas de la revuelta popular: ¡avanzar a la huelga general!, convergenciamedios.cl, 11/11/19.



betray processes of mobilization like the current one. That is why the most right-wing forces that operate in defense of the regime do not lightly accept the most democratic plebiscite: the strength of the streets. Therefore, there is no possible reconciliation with them. They must be thrown out from power through planned mass struggle, with the self-determination of the base and its coordination to concentrate energy in a single blow, in support of a program and a strategy: a new power, based on the

democratic organizations of the working class and the people. To drive this strategy, we need a left wing project very different to the FA or the PC.

21ST CENTURY INTERNATIONALISM

Capital and its political forces operate on the international field with a conclusive policy: to divide, wear down, obstruct. All at the service of avoiding what would be a fatal blow to the forces

The ex Nueva Mayoría (PC-PS) and the Frente Amplio

The Defenders of the Capitalist Institutional Order

The revolution that the youth, workers and the people of our country are carrying out does not stop and has managed to put 30 years of the regime inherited from the bloody dictatorship in check. Millions in the streets, assemblies, confrontation with repressive forces and clarity in the demands: *Piñera must go* and *Constituent Assembly* to end the regime. But not all the forces involved in the process seek to develop and strengthen the mechanisms for direct participation and mobilization. Some forces, consistent with their history, sought to divert the political initiative towards the regime's outdated institutions from day one. Others, which had emerged as renovators, repeat the script of previous ones, ignoring the voice of the majorities. They are content with their role as "representatives" seeking at all costs to close the crisis with an agreement between leaderships and to "manage" the voice of the streets from their parliamentary seats.

Against old and new reformists, in the revolutionary left, we defend the initiative of the working masses who have decided to end this regime of misery, repression and plunder and dive into the fight for a country of the 99%.

The PC Does Not Surprise

The Communist Party of Chile is as communist as Piñera is sensitive. It was one of the devices that guaranteed the Pinochet-led transition that gave rise

to the current political regime. Forming part of capitalist governments such as that of the ex Nueva Mayoría, it dedicated itself to managing the state from the point of view of the bourgeoisie, supporting the handing over of all that was public to corporations.

In the current mobilization process, from the unions and organizations that it leads and also from its own political leaders, its main orientation is to dismantle the mobilization and divert it into state institutions. It first avoided joining the general strike of Monday October 21, saying that the "*conditions are not right*." Then it called a strike the following Wednesday and Thursday to recover the initiative from the popular outpouring in the streets.

They never left the Parliament and, after presenting a constitutional accusation against Piñera for the repression, they ended up leaving it aside to launch, right when social mobilization was peaking and assemblies were emerging throughout the country, a call for a plebiscite on a constitutional reform for December 15.¹

The Frente Amplio: Light Progressives in Times of Revolution

An expression of the discontent with the regime's parties build up over many years, the Frente Amplio emerged in our country promising "new politics." Mounted on the student struggles of 2011 and the beginning of the social upheaval of recent years, a series of di-

of capital: the unity of the working class and its struggles with an anti-capitalist and socialist strategy across all borders. That objective is more valid than ever. The whole “progressive” cycle of 2000-2008 in Latin America was a huge missed opportunity. There were favorable economic conditions and a massive social forces to guide on a revolutionary path, but it was decided to pact with corporations and their local associates.

The current social and political polarization, the weakening of US imperialism and the correlation of force that corroborate the vitality of the masses throughout the world, offer a new cycle of opportunity to cut the link in the chain of plunder and dispossession. The key is a simultaneous movement to fight to build a political force with

mass influence and achieve power in a country; and at the same time, to build a dynamic international organization that collaborates with a political framework, militant solidarity and effective material support, so that a revolutionary triumph that is achieved in one country, far from being isolated, can plan a determined orientation of “infecting” the region and the world.

The International Socialist League (ISL), composed of revolutionary forces from four continents, is built out of the living process of the class struggle through its national parties, organizations and groups. It contributes, advises, guides and supports the activity of each national organization with militant campaigns, in a democratic and enriching reciprocal process. In Chile, the teamwork carried out by the ISL and the Movimiento Anticapitalista, through its Argentine party, the MST



verse parties and groups, especially from the student movement and some splits from the PC, set up an electoral front that served as a channel of expression for a sector of the mass movement.

But the FA quickly made itself at home in the bourgeois institutions, refusing to incorporate sectors of the radical left or adopt mobilization as a method of political action. For example, they voted for the pro-imperialist Free Trade Agreements proposed by the Piñera government in Parliament.

When the insurrection began, the FA and the PC pronounced themselves against “violence”, pointing out that *“Chile will not be changed with looting and fires”*,² when street fighting and mass mobilizations were precisely the methods that have paved the way.

To reposition themselves, Social Unity (FA-PC front) promoted the general strike of October 23 and 24, but trying to demobilize the second day and prioritizing parliamentary action to vote superficial laws in an attempt to calm the situation.

In the midst of the repression, while hundreds of cases of rape, forced disappearances, torture and thousands of arrests came to light, they proposed a “dialogue” with the new minister Blumel³, in fact endorsing the farce of ministerial exchange with which Piñera tried

to close the process. Similarly, Giorgio Jackson, one of the FA leaders, holds that *“the accusation against the president is something that can, at least, make them understand that they have to be measured and controlled.”* That is, at the height of the mobilization, with the majority demanding Piñera to resign, the FA understands that, at most, the government should be “measured and controlled,” as if the accumulation of human rights violations were not enough.

The intention to have a “dialogue” quickly materialized in a pact to save Piñera from falling when he was at his worst political moment, right when the general strike had cornered him and forced him to accept the need to change the Constitution. At that moment, the FA signed its capitulation to the promise of a process that would not begin until the first months of next year! A complete scam of the will of the mass struggle expressed in the streets and also an internal bomb, not even consulted with its own members.

A resounding sign that reformist and electoralist projects have very specific limits that they are not willing to overstep. We call on all the honest militants of these organizations to break with that project that proved to be profoundly conservative and undemocratic, and to build an authentic revolutionary force of the left in our country. 🐞

1. eldinamo.cl, 11/5/19.

2. “Frente Amplio y PC refuerzan condena a la violencia, pero critican al Ejecutivo”, latercera.com/política, 10/29/19.

3. “Frente Amplio llama a Blumel conversar y adelantan propuesta de plabiscito ‘que permita a la ciudadanía decidir los caminos’”, eldesconcierto.cl, 10/29/19.



(Socialist Workers Party), is proof of the validity and imperative need of militant internationalism. The project of a new left in Chile must include an active internationalism in the training of its cadres and militants, and in aiming to influence the best of the vanguard with that conception.

A TASK FOR THE MANY: TURNING EVERYTHING AROUND

The activity of these weeks has been intense, dizzying. Our group, the young Movimiento Anticapitalista, was forged in the streets, in assemblies, *cabildos* (town halls) and the powerful general strikes that cornered the regime. We met many outstanding fighters. We agree on crucial issues. Now, along with continuing the process of struggle, which has entered a new stage in the country, we want to frankly pose the need to build a new revolutionary, feminist, anti-capitalist, eco-socialist and internationalist force.

We speak especially to the hundreds who do not accept the pact from above engendered by the culprits of the “30 years” and their new accomplices. To the hundreds of activists who sympathized with the FA, and the revolution ended up revealing to them that this front offers nothing more than a new parliamentary frustration and has no higher aspiration than to occupy a seat in Congress and rub shoulders with the

representatives of traditional politics. We do not want to renew the regime: we fight to dismantle it. We know that a lot of honest leftist activists with revolutionary aspirations trusted the FA and now ponder how to continue. Our proposal to them: let’s build a new political instrument together, taking the discussion of the causes and proposals that we develop above as a starting point. But staying open on our side to the clash of ideas, to the exchange of opinions, to synthesize positions to move forward without bureaucracy or personality cults, betting on the free debate of ideas.

We say the same to the young and critical rank-and-file PC militants that we have met, who do not share the perspective of a leadership that, in the end, always ends up caving in. Let’s build a new political reference together. And of course, the same goes to all the groups and forces that vindicate the same causes on the left. For our part, we intend to continue building with passion, with much renewed optimism in our class, in the youth, in our people, and in the ideas of a socialism with real democracy that guarantees rights and emancipation. We are aiming for a different story for our Chile, one written by the working class, the irreverent youth, the feminist movement, the people who fight. Let’s aim for the sky. The skies are taken by storm, without asking for permission. For a government of those who have never governed: the working class and the people. ✊



COUP AND MASSIVE RESISTANCE in Bolivia

■ GUSTAVO GIMÉNEZ

THE COUP UNLEASHED A FIERCE RESISTANCE AGAINST THE ILLEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT OF JEANINE AÑEZ, AN AGENT OF THE GREAT BOURGEOISIE AND IMPERIALISM. UNLIKE WHAT EVO AND THE MAS PROPOSE, THE SOLUTION IS NOT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE COUP LEADERS BUT DEFEAT THEM.

A new confrontation in the Senkata distillery of El Alto between repressive forces and the people that were occupying it to disrupt the distribution of fuel to La Paz left a total of nine people dead and dozens wounded on November

19. Widespread indignation reigns in this city, vanguard against the coup, and in the people that confront it. Meanwhile, popular *cabildos* (town halls) are taking place. Among them, a massive one in El Alto that voted to mobilize against the coup, and another in Sacaba, Cochabamba, that began debating how to arm the people and take other measures of self-defense.

On Thursday 21, a massive mobilization of the people of El Alto that marched through the streets of La Paz carrying the five coffins of those murdered in Senkata, was violently repressed.

We Tell [the Coup Leaders]: “We Would Rather Die Than Live As Slaves”

Huanini is a city in the State of Oruro, in the Bolivian high plane, 4.000 meters above sea level and it is the “national capital of tin”. It is a typical working class population with a traditional mining enclave industry. They have a long history of struggles against dictatorships and privatizing governments. A few years ago, the people achieved the nationalization of the main deposit, at Mount Posokoni. Today they resist the coup’s attacks. We spoke to one of the young leaders of the Mixed Union of Huanini Mining Workers. For safety reasons, we name him by his initials. This is what he said on November 22.

What is the situation in Huanini since the coup?

W.P.V.: In the first place, I want to send a revolutionary greeting to MST comrades, and to thank them for their help. First, my comrade, you must know that Huanini as a mining center has always been characterized as being a sector of constant struggle for the Bolivian people’s demands. In the past, there have been historical battles against de facto and right wing governments that sowed pain, grief, genocide and persecution in our old union leaders. The first national union was also created here: the Mixed Union of Huanini Mining Workers, as well as the Union Federation of Mining Workers of Bolivia.



In Huanini, since the coup took place, we have been under the constant threat of a possible occupation of Mount Posokoni – the main tin deposit - by mining cooperatives from the State of Potosi that are related to that city’s Civic Committee and the coup government. This threat is the main reason why Huanini is not fighting in La Paz, because leaving the district would allow the invasion and occupation of our tin deposit. On the other hand, we are suffering a dire shortage of basic products. We have already experienced hunger and poverty during the de facto governments, but our children have not, and that is why we have not stopped, nor will we stop, fighting for their future. We do not want the military to knock our doors down again, or to silence us by shooting us in front of our families. In the past, the fascist capitalist governments oppressed or tried to oppress the mining working class through genocide and persecution. Today we tell them: we would rather die than live as slaves!

How are you preparing to resist the coup government?

Though the threat of an invasion is latent, we know that at some point we will have to take to the streets, even though this government approved a law that exempts the Police and the Army from any responsibility in their genocidal operations. In a general assembly of all Huanini mining

There were new clashes. At the K’ara K’ara landfill, a confrontation ended with 24 soldiers with fractures and trauma from thrown stones, while eight of them were detained by the people for three hours.

Tension is building up and times are accelerating. The government reached an agreement with the MAS (Movement for Socialism), Evo’s party that has a majority in both Houses, on a law to hold new elections in 120 days. Añez signed it on Sunday the 24th. That law invalidates the election of October 20 and bans Evo and Alvaro Garcia Linera from

being candidates¹. This is a betrayal to the heroic struggle of the Bolivian people against the coup.

A PRO-IMPERIALIST COUP

The massacre of Cochabamba on November 15, perpetrated by the police and the army against thousands of rural workers from Chapare who were marching to La Paz, with a total of nine killed, dozens injured and a hundred detained, and the recent massacre of the Senkata raid, leave any discussion on the nature of the current Bolivian



workers, the great majority voted to immediately call and organize an extended national assembly of our parent entities of the COB to set the dates for congresses to elect new leaders to represent us and confront the coup in unity with all Bolivian workers.

We also demand that the coup government stop the genocide and political persecution, and that self-proclaimed president Áñez resign. There are people imprisoned with ridiculous accusations, but they do not know that we have many more political and union leaders in our ranks, and that in order to stop us they would have to jail 90% of us. We call for a national *cabildo* of the organizations that reject the coup, to vote new representatives for new national elections and to confront the coup with a democratic solution in order to defeat it. Without unity, this will be difficult.

Can you confirm that not only the miners, but the people of Huanuni began a blockade in Machacamarca on the road to Oruro?

The people of Huanuni, the community of the Ayllus (a rural people of our province), transportation and municipal workers, and the unions are blocking the Machacamarquita crossroad, on the road to Oruro, which also connects the States of Potosí and Sucre to the city of Huanuni. We demand the pacification of the

country and the resignation of genocidal Áñez. We also condemn the Bolivian media that lies and colludes against the Bolivian people. Our struggle is in defense of our essential rights, in the first place, the right to live and respect for our country's sovereignty. We will not allow the looting of our natural resources by transnational corporations. The people of Bolivia are tired of the attacks against our country and a great majority are not defined by a particular political color, but by their class consciousness.

What do you think of the perspective of fighting for a government of the working people in your country?

The Bolivian people have always fought for their rights. Unlike other countries, we were hit by the oppression of the Spanish conquest and de facto capitalist governments. The years of abuse and genocide have taught us that our freedom is our most valuable treasure and that it is worth sacrificing our lives to conserve and defend it, so that future generations can live in a free country. A government of the working people has always been our greatest desire as a class in our country. I am convinced that with the total unity of Bolivian workers, we will reach this goal.

How importance do you think international solidarity with the struggle of the working class and the people of Bolivia is?

International solidarity has always been very valuable to us. Our people need it and let the world know that Bolivia is resisting and that it does not give up easily. We must multiply the struggle of the working class and the poor people of my country for their fundamental rights. And let me tell you that it is an honor for this humble miner to count with the support of the MST and the International Socialist League. Until the final victory, my comrades! 🇵🇪

government and the attitude of its repressive apparatus behind. Only servants of Trump and the Bolivian oligarchy, like Macri or OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, can still maintain the euphemism that what Bolivia is suffering is not a coup, but an "institutional crisis". Unfortunately, sectors of Bolivia's social movements and of the left that had confronted Evo's austerity measures fed this confusion in the beginning.

These days, Bolivian peasants and workers are the protagonists of thousands of heroic and uneven battles against repressive forces that are armed

to the teeth. Yet, despite sustaining 30 deaths, hundreds of people injured and several thousand detentions, their struggle has not been put down. They are fighting without a leadership, given the defection of the MAS leadership. Among those who confront the coup, there are sectors that follow Evo's current, while many others have politically broken with that leadership.

The government of right-wing senator Añez that took over the presidency on November 11, in an almost empty Legislative Assembly, without the necessary quorum, inaugurated by



the military, tried to stop the protests with the police. She was inaugurated surrounded by right-wing politicians, with a racist speech against indigenous people (who account for 60% of Bolivia's population). She applied reactionary measures, like persecuting the foreign media, and immediately aligned with Trump's international policy, expelling 200 Cuban doctors and the Venezuelan diplomatic delegation. Since the police was not enough to stop the mobilized people of El Alto, she used the Army against the popular resistance, no matter the cost. While she negotiates a political solution to her situation with the MAS, Añez has ordered the Army to unleash their deadly arsenal. When she signed a decree exempting the military and the police from any legal responsibility for the repression, these had already committed the Sacaba massacre, and then they advanced on Senkata.

The coup government needs to stop the popular rising to take control and also agree on an "institutional" exit with the MAS, because without their participation any presidential election would be invalid. Morales, who resigned and went into exile - in lieu of the military's "suggestion" that he abandon power - is not calling on people to resist the coup with the excuse of avoiding greater persecutions against his followers and preventing bloodshed. Now, emboldened by the massive resistance that Bolivians are putting up with El Alto at their vanguard, he talks about a possible return to

"pacify" the country and calls on people to stop confronting the coup.

There are negotiations between Añez's supporters and those of Evo, despite their public declarations and strong-arming that obstruct the closing of the deal. After a brief moment in which the Police banned them from entering Congress, the MAS legislators were able to enter and choose new authorities in both Houses, in which they hold majorities and quorum of their own. They coincide with Añez on the need to dismantle the crisis and the resistance to the coup through new elections.

Evo's legislators first called a Legislative Assembly for November 19, but then cancelled it because, though the leader of the MAS announced that he would not be a candidate, the current government declared that it would not allow him to enter the country. There are divisions in the MAS, where some sectors would rather pact with the de facto government, even without Evo. This is because the background of the deal is marked by an intensification of confrontations and by the seriousness of the political crisis. In this situation, Añez threatened to call for a new election by decree, while the Catholic Church and the European Union representative tried, with the blessing of Evo and Añez, to reach an agreement.

In the end, the MAS reached an agreement with the coup plotters, which constitutes a new and serious betrayal against those who risk their lives on the streets against the dictatorship.

Against the repression, the killings, the illegitimate occupation of power by the rightist opposition, the only possible pacification of the country would be achieved by defeating the coup. This means overthrowing Añez and her minions, dismissing from the Police and the Army and incarcerating those responsible for the coup. It also implies arresting the political and material culprits of human rights violations, beginning with Añez, Camacho, Mesa and their accomplices, as well as taking economic measures in favor of the majorities.

This maneuver, in the style of the Chilean pact between Piñera and the “opposition”, intends to stop and betray the mobilization with an agreement that allows Añez and the military to keep power and be the referees of an electoral exit without Evo as a candidate. It also guarantees the impunity for the coup’s democratic and human rights violations, going against the struggle of hundreds of thousands. If it is consolidated and imposed, this pact will give birth to a new political regime, offspring of a brutal attack against the Bolivian people’s liberties, that will attempt to smash hard won rights and impose the same harsh capitalist austerity that the peoples of the world are revolting.

THE RESISTANCE TO THE COUP

Diametrically opposed to Evo’s proposals, an important *cabildo* that met in El Alto, representing the city’s 14 districts and the country’s 20 provinces, decided to radicalize the struggle with a national blockade on November 17, particularly in La Paz, as part of a strike for indefinite time, until Añez leaves. Despite the massacres of Cochabamba and El Alto, the resistance does not stop.

The heroic people of El Alto and their mobilizations to La Paz were joined by the peasants and poor people of Cochabamba and Potosí. New massive mobilizations occupied La Paz on November 18 and the resistance continued growing, when the government counter-attacked on the 19th in Senkata. The course of events, the increasing violence of the confrontation, Añez’s racist declarations that aim to consolidate the coup’s social base in the most reactionary sectors, have expanded the support of those who struggle against the coup. As the Añez government cannot defeat the resistance, it is possible that the sectors that were dubious in the beginning because of their

opposition to Evo’s anti-popular measures, will now join the resistance. This can increasingly weaken Añez and endanger the continuity of the coup.

The rising resistance accelerated the negotiations between the de facto government and the MAS leadership to prevent its growth from getting completely out of control. They needed to put a stop to it. That is why the pact of the MAS with the coup plotters is a monumental betrayal to the Bolivian people’s struggle.

The leadership of the COB (Bolivian Workers’ Union), which asked for Evo to step down even before the Army did, is part of this betrayal. It first demanded Añez to normalize “the institutional situation”: a policy that favors the plan for new elections with the de facto president in power. The COB now supports the call for new elections with the coup plotters in power and is part of a negotiation bureau with leaders of the MAS and other sectors. Working class sectors of the COB rank-and-file are organizing against that bureaucratic leadership and want the Union to confront the coup plotters.

WHY DID EVO FALL FROM POWER?

One must wonder why, after almost three terms, Evo lost power and resigned without putting up a fight. Evo and García Linera won the 2006 elections after the popular uprising that forced former liberal president Sánchez de Lozada, and then his vice-president Carlos Mesa, to step down. This was the result of a colossal triumph of the Bolivian people in the so-called “Gas War”, in which the selling of the national gas company to foreign (particularly Chilean) capitals at a vile price was stopped. Then, Evo launched a partial yet progressive measure: the nationalization of gas and oil deposits.

However, Evo Morales, the first indigenous president in a nation with an indigenous majority, betrayed the main demands of the popular uprisings of 2000 and 2003 shortly after taking office in 2006. He took advantage of the rise in international prices of raw materials and, negotiated a new Political Constitution with the Bolivian bourgeoisie and oligarchy, changing over 100 articles that had been voted by a Constituent Assembly. He did make some concessions that improved the people’s quality of life, but without touching the semi-colonial capitalist base of the country.

He imposed a model of extractivist

accumulation that allowed the Bolivian economy to grow at a 4% annual rate. But, as we have seen before in the neoliberal models, an economic boom can produce some immediate improvements in the living conditions of the masses, but it deepens social inequalities and does not solve the structural problems of capitalist decadence. When the world situation becomes unfavourable for local exports, and that affects the people's living conditions, accumulated contradictions tend to explode.

In order to promote a capitalist development of Bolivia, Evo collaborated with the oligarchy and multinational corporations and clashed with sectors that had supported him up to then. To advance with his project, he divided and confronted the indigenous movement: there are over 200 people have been prosecuted for confronting his government's policies. Evo won over a sector of the leadership, but in 2011 he clashed with the peasants that live in the TIPNIS (Isiboro-Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory) over the construction of a road, which was part of the IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America) plan to unite the Chinese and Brazilian markets, and implied an environmental disaster. He repressed that indigenous community and broke with it.

Furthermore, to extend the "agricultural frontier" for soy and meat production for export, he approved the clearing of native forests, ignoring the interests and rights of the peoples who live there, causing a disaster in the Bolivian Amazon triggered by "controlled burnings". He fought against the neighbourhood boards of Potosi over the turning over of lithium deposits to German companies, with scant royalties for the region, which he was forced to stop because of the strong protests. He confronted the teachers, the miners and other unions organized in the COB, that began to oppose his government in defense of their labour conquests.

RE-ELECTION AND DEMANDS OF FRAUD

After his third term, he tried to pass a new bill that allowed him to be candidate for a fourth time by forcing an arbitrary interpretation of the constitutional reform that only allowed two successive terms (he only counted the terms after the reform, ignoring his first mandate). He held a referendum in February 2016, which he lost with 51% voting against. Though he said he

accepted the result, he then managed to achieve a favourable ruling by the MAS controlled Constitutional Court, which he dominates. That ruling was blessed by Almagro and the OAS, which then supported his government for sustaining the capitalist "stability and growth" that former governments had not achieved.

The provisional vote count of the October 20 elections precipitated the crisis that had been building up. For the first time, Evo obtained less than 50% in a general election. With over 84% of votes counted, the right-wing candidate, Carlos Mesa, had over 37,8% against Evo's 45,7%: there was a difference of less than 10 points, which meant a second round. Suddenly, the counting was stopped and reinitiated 15 hours later: against all odds, the difference was over 10 points...

PROTESTS ERUPT AGAINST EVO'S MANEVRES

The anger against what happened provoked the pronouncement of the COB and of other sectors that had once supported Evo. The FSTMB (Union Federation of Bolivian Mining Workers) asked for his resignation. The reaction of these sectors received widespread support from the middle class, with secondary school and university students at the vanguard, as well as from the UPEA (Public University of El Alto) authorities, feminist groups like Mujeres Creando, La Paz teachers, UMSA workers, Adecococa and Achacachi coca growers, the local COB of Sucre and Potosí, Cochabamba workers and San Cristobal and Chojlla miners. For three weeks, there were bitter clashes between the Police and pro-government groups of the MAS, that left a total of three people dead and dozens injured. Days before the coup, the Police confined itself to its stations.

This movement, which at first was democratic and progressive against the government's electoral manevres and policies, was used by the right, in absence of a working class leadership capable of radicalizing it against Evo's policies. The COB leadership opted out. In this serious political crisis, the right, first with Mesa and then with Fernando Camacho, representing the oligarchy and imperialist interests, took advantage of the weakness of Evo's government to initiate this coup. Camacho, president of the Santa Cruz Neighborhood Board, is a very powerful figure on the right, and belongs to Bolivia's richest family, with large investments in hydrocarbons. This man, who took the Bible

to the Palacio Quemado (the government palace), encouraged the burning of the Wihpala, and called on the Police and the Army to oust Evo from power.

The OAS, asked by Morales to audit the vote count, emitted a provisional resolution on November 10 reporting “serious irregularities” in the elections. Evo accepted the resolution of this imperialist organization, which had previously supported him, and called for new elections. But that was not enough. First, the COB asked for his separation from government and then the head of the Army – who has since been replaced – “suggested” to Evo that he should resign to avoid greater confrontations. In the end, Evo resigned.

The erosion of Morales’ government, one of the region’s so-called progressive ones, is now following the path of Kirchnerism and the Brazilian PT. When the commodities boom was over, their policy of administering local capitalism and their deals with imperialism kicked in and they tried to make the working people, who had previously brought them to power, pay for the crisis. Evo repeated this pattern, which explains why he lacked social defence against his adversary’s attacks, as well as his decision to demobilize when the coup took place.

The bourgeoisie and imperialism acted as they tend to do with these governments that emerge as a distorted reflection of the processes of mobilization: they first agree on how to maintain their deals and then, when these governments wear out their support and can no longer contain the masses, they throw them overboard and impose new governments that respond to their plans of rapine. They squeeze them like a lemon, and then discard them. That is why Almagro shifted from supporting the Constitutional Court’s ruling that enabled Evo’s re-election to speaking out as an anti-fraud champion.

That is also why the illusions of many who struggle against the coup and believe that a future return of Evo will solve the problems that took them to this counter-revolutionary coup, are mistaken. On the contrary, his policies of making agreements with the local bourgeoisie and the corporations, abandoning and confronting his peasant and popular base, are what brought this situation on.

Evo would continue applying this line in the government because, in order to sustain the capitalist system, which he does not propose to break with, more austerity for workers, peasants and the poor, and the complete delivery

of resources to extractivist companies will be needed. Only a government of the social organizations, the workers, the peasants, and the indigenous people can, by breaking with capitalist domination and taking control over the country’s natural resources and the economy’s main pillars, provide a solution to the current Bolivian crisis and convene a Constituent Assembly to reorganize the country on new bases.



DEFEATING THE COUP AND FIGHTING FOR AN ANTI-CAPITALIST SOLUTION

The Bolivian people’s uprising against the coup is part of a series of mobilizations, uprisings and revolutions in the region, and a more extended global struggle against the austerity plans of the IMF and the capitalist system’s decadence that we will analyze in the other articles of this magazine. The struggle between the revolution and the counter-revolution is intensifying, and the future of the processes that take place in Latin America and the world depends on their development.

A great part of Bolivia’s territory is paralyzed. Up to 94 road blockades were counted, with a greater concentration around La Paz, Oruro and Cochabamba, especially in the coca-growing zone. The blockade of La Paz has caused a growing shortage of food and fuel, and the government is trying to break it with repression. The massacres and the government’s will to repress with war ammunition, pose a very serious scenario. It is



necessary to maintain and strengthen the actions of struggle, looking for the way to rebuild a centralized leadership of the fight.

Now the resistance to the coup must confront and defeat this pact of the MAS, the COB leadership and the right wing de facto Áñez government, with their trap of antidemocratic elections and their political project to defeat the people's conquests. Though it is too early to know what course the situation will take, we are sure of one thing: to consolidate, the monster that emerges from this pact must confront and defeat the heroic people of Bolivia, and the outcome of that battle is uncertain. More so, because the struggles in Latin America are putting the right wing governments and their capitalist "opposition" accomplices against the ropes.

The Bolivian people have a historical experience of social organization and revolutionary struggle. It is essential to strengthen the development of self-organization in the *cabildos* or the forms that each struggling sector creates. Its centralization

is decisive for the successful development of the resistance, to fulfil immediate tasks like self-defense and, fundamentally, to continue the mobilization to defeat the coup, confronting the maneuvers and deceitful pacts that try to get people off the streets.

It is necessary for the anti-coup mobilization, mainly based in the rural resistance, to generate a program that includes the demands of the working class and urban sectors that previously confronted Evo's austerity plans and have been abandoned by the COB leadership.

There is also a need to build a new anti-capitalist political tool that, taking advantage of the experience of the Bolivian vanguard and masses with the hesitations and betrayals of the MAS, can create a revolutionary party to confront the coup on the streets and take the struggle to the end. A party to fight for a government of the rural, indigenous and workers' organizations, one that breaks with the current capitalist extractivist model and imposes an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist plan, expropriating the oligarchy and the corporations that support the coup. To end with the Bolivia of betrayed revolutions and military coups, and to inaugurate a new Bolivia at the service of workers and peasants, and respecting the right to plurinationality demanded by the majority of its people. A nation without oppression, exploitation or misery: a Bolivia that struggles with its sister countries in the region for a socialist Latin America. 🐼



ISL Declaration AGAINST THE CAPITALIST AND IMPERIALIST COUP IN BOLIVIA

1. The resignation of President Evo Morales on November 10, hours after announcing that he would call new elections, consummates a coup of the oligarchic right-wing and imperialism against the Bolivian government and people. This outcome comes after weeks of protests and an OAS audit that pointed out “serious irregularities” in the October 20 elections that declared Evo winner in the first round. The rebellion against the government broke out after opposition candidate Carlos Mesa denounced fraud when the publication of official results placed him more than 10 points below Evo, while the difference when the provisional count was suspended 15 hours earlier was smaller and indicated a second round would be necessary. Over the next three weeks, opposition protests clashed with supporters of Evo and the police, leaving three dead and 200 wounded.
2. Behind Mesa, the old oligarchic right and imperialism has rallied. Taking advantage of Evo losing support among his social base and the general population, they launched this attempt to seize power. Mesa was the vice president of neo-liberal Sánchez de Lozada when he was overthrown by the 2003 Gas War and Mesa resigned himself from the presidency amid massive protests against him two years later. Among the most active leaders of the Defense of Democracy Coordination launched by Mesa after the October 20 election, is Luis Fernando Camacho of the Santa Cruz Civic Committee, who called on the army and the police to “side with the people.” Amid the protests, sectors of the repressive forces turned towards the opposition.
- Police in various regions mutinied and the army first declared that it would not repress the protests and then joined the coup.
3. The OAS, together with the European Union and the governments of the United States, Brazil and Argentina, rejected the result of the October 20 election and “recommended” the holding of a second round even if the audits were to confirm a distance greater than 10 points in favor of Evo Morales. A flagrant imperialist intervention in the internal politics of Bolivia and an attack on its sovereignty. Evo denounced that there was a “coup in progress”, but accepted the OAS audit, which he then complied with, hours before resigning from the presidency, capitulating to the coup to attempt a new pact with the oligarchic right.
4. The massive size of the opposition protests, the prominence of the youth in them, as well as the participation of organizations like the Fejuve of El Alto or the request of Evo’s resignation by the COB, both of which were among the main protagonists of the Gas War that catapulted Evo and the MAS to power, point to a profound disappointment with the government. Evo Morales reached this election with an advanced deterioration of the support of his social base and his general legitimacy. Shortly after assuming the presidency in 2006, he betrayed the October Program of the 2000 and 2003 people’s rebellions that ousted Sánchez de Lozada and brought Evo’s MAS to power, by agreeing the Political Constitution of the State with the right and capital in the Congress, sidestepping the Constituent Assembly of 2008 and modifying

over 100 articles that the Assembly had written. Since then, though granting concessions to the mass movement and increasing state participation in the economy, Evo acted as guarantor of capitalist business in Bolivia, maintaining the dependent and extractivist economic model. This led him to clash and break with sectors of the working class and the indigenous peasantry itself that makes up the bulk of his social base. A central expression of this rupture has been the state repression and criminalization of social protest, including of the miners and coca growers of northern La Paz, who have had over 200 peasant and native activists criminalized. In 2016, Evo called a referendum to modify the constitution and enable another re-election, which he ended up losing. But the following year, the Plurinational Constitutional Court, under his control, ignored the referendum and declared the articles of the Constitution that prevent a second re-election void, enabling Evo to run this year for his fourth presidential term. This way, Morales reached this year's election with his democratic legitimacy strongly questioned, and the unrest over his Bonapartist and undemocratic traits worsened with the irregularities during the vote count.

5. Taking note of the weakening of Evo's social base of support, the right saw the opportunity to wield power directly, and took it. It is a recurring scenario in the region and the world. Other governments that emerged in Latin America in the heat of the revolutionary processes of the previous decade, generating expectations among working people, but remaining within the limits of capitalism and its dependent and extractivist economic model, instead of advancing the revolution, ended up applying austerity programs and developing increasingly Bonapartist characteristics, disillusioning people and weakening, opening the door for the return of the right, which tolerates them while they have no choice, and gets rid of them as soon as they can, and however they can. In some cases by electoral means, in others with coup attempts. Those who have still managed to stay, like Maduro and Ortega, did so at the cost of becoming themselves the authoritarian executors of brutal austerity measures and armed forces with a strong involvement in business and privileges. Confronting the coup attempt in Bolivia would

require promoting the massive mobilization of the native people, the peasantry and the working class; the democratic self-organization of working peoples; and adopting economic and social policies to place the country's enormous national resources at the service of the social needs of the majority. Unfortunately Evo and the MAS were and are far from this orientation.

6. This coup occurs in the context of the rebellions against the IMF austerity programs and the governments that apply them in Latin America, such as in Chile and Ecuador, and other countries of the world. Imperialism will try to use this coup against the continental rebellion and the Chilean people's one in particular. False progressives will also try to use it to justify their capitulating politics and oppose their policies agreed with power, such as a possible constitutional reform from above and new plebiscite in Chile, to revolutionary mobilization until Piñera falls and a truly free and sovereign constituent assembly is imposed. That is why it is indispensable to support the Chilean people's revolution in all our countries from a class based position, independent of all bourgeois forces and conciliatory organizations that have adapted to the regime.
7. The **International Socialist League** rejects the current capitalist and imperialist coup and condemns the repression and persecution unleashed against activists, social movements and leaders of the deposed government. We call on the Bolivian people and the workers of the world to confront the coup and any imperialist intervention with the independent mobilization of workers, peasants and native peoples until getting rid of the capitalists and large landowners and imposing a government of the organizations that workers and the poor build democratically. The Bolivian working people must take the country's natural resources, wealth and strategic economic levers into their hands and use them to the benefit of the majority. This is the only real way to defeat capitalists and imperialism. We invite Bolivian workers, peasants and youth to build the Bolivian section of the ISL to carry out these challenging revolutionary tasks toward a socialist Bolivia and Latin America. ✊

November 11, 2019



ECUADOR: AGAINST THE AUSTERITY OF MORENO AND THE IMF

A Rebellion With an UNCERTAIN OUTCOME

■ ALBERTO GIOVANELLI

ECUADOR HAS NOT BEEN THE SAME SINCE OCTOBER 1, WHEN LENÍN MORENO ANNOUNCED A NEOLIBERAL PACKAGE BASED ON THE BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIREMENTS IMPLEMENTED BY THE IMF.

A very rich process was sparked, which is still in development, with the Ecuadorian people cornering the government, placing the regime's institutions in check, and fighting boldly despite the hesitations of their leaders.

The president had announced, through

Presidential Decree 883 that, fuel subsidies would be eliminated, the salary mass of all public service temporary contracts to be renewed would be reduced by 20%, the annual holiday period of state companies would be reduced from 30 to 15 days, and state workers would be forced to contribute a day's salary per month to the public treasury. In parallel, a series of labor reforms were decreed that implied the flexibilization of the private labor market, justifying it with the argument of needing to implement a model "in line with the new times" ...

POPULAR MOBILIZATION AND INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

The announcement first caused the rejection of transport workers, who went on strike. The next day, the National Indigenous Confederation of Ecuador (CONAIE), together with other trade unions and social organizations, announced a call for a major national strike against the government's economic measures.

Between that Wednesday, the 2nd, and Sunday, October 6, multiple popular assemblies followed, especially in provinces with a strong indigenous presence - such as the areas of Sierra Centro - and in the Amazonian territory. In parallel, road blockades and mobilizations began in different locations. Over the weekend, the road blockades had already paralyzed all of Ecuador. Likewise, university students in Quito took to the streets in solidarity with the indigenous call, demanding the repeal of Decree 883 and other economic measures announced by the president. The government responded with repression, accompanied by a surprising declaration of a state of exception, limiting the right of transit,

association and assembly, freedom of information, inviolability of residence and correspondence.

A very nervous Lenín Moreno announced the state of exception in a new television broadcast, surrounded by his vice president, Otto Sonnenholzner, a young businessman from the coastal elites, with no political experience, his Minister of Defense, and the Armed Forces high command. To the surprise of Ecuadorian society, the announcement was broadcast from Guayaquil, the country's second city. The government had abandoned the presidential headquarters of Quito, the capital. What was intended to be a show of strength with the declaration of the state of exception, became the most palpable evidence of the government's weakness.

Moreno had left the Carondelet Palace because he was afraid that the facilities would be taken by protesters. Contemplating that possibility was not an "exaggeration," nor was the possibility of the armed forces letting the protesters in: some clashes between police officers and soldiers, a significant number of defections, and the images of police officers held hostage by indigenous organizations, made that hypothesis viable.

What is the CONAIE?

■ A. G.

The main protagonist of the rebellion in Ecuador has been the indigenous movement, organized primarily around the CONAIE, the Confederation of Ecuadorian Indigenous Nationalities, which integrates indigenous nations from the country's three regions: Andean, Coastal and Amazonian.

The CONAIE has been a central actor in Ecuadorian politics since the 1990s, due to its capacity to mobilize and overthrow presidents, as it did in 1997, 2000, and 2005, as well as to impose political agendas or participate in different governments, contributing ministers and officials to some of the administrations it later helped oust. This is exactly what happened when they supported and then confronted Gutierrez, Correa, and Lenín Moreno himself.

Access to land, and the incursion of indigenous groups in the commercialization of agricultural products, allowed the emergence of well-off layers,

a kind of new indigenous oligarchy, which have formed the basis for the development of a new Andean intellectuality. This phenomenon is seen in most ethnic groups. The CONAIE leadership itself is a product of this process.

The CONAIE is the majority organization but does not, however, represent the entire indigenous movement. Ethnic consciousness is also manifested in other organizations such as the Ecuadorian Federation of Evangelical Indigenous People (FEINE) and the National Federation of Indigenous and Black Peasant Organizations (FENOCIN).

The FEINE, for example, was founded in 1980 on the initiative of US Protestant churches. It is currently made up of 14 provincial associations, covering the Quichua, Shuar, Achuar, Siona, Sequoia, Huaorani, Cofan, Tsáchila, Chachis and Awa nationalities. Although its organization is mostly rural, it has spread to Quito and Guayaquil, cities with significant indigenous populations. The FEINE is a religious organization and has always been located to the right of all mobilization processes.

That same night and during the following days, Oswaldo Jarrín, current Minister of Defense, repeatedly threatened protestors with the use of lethal weapons if facilities that the government considered strategic were occupied. Nothing mattered: mobilizations continued throughout the country.

EVERYONE IN THE STREETS

On Monday, October 7, columns of thousands of protestors from the indigenous provinces began arriving in Quito. Entrances to the capital were heavily guarded by contingents of Special Operations of the National Police. However, given the increasing number of protestors, the indigenous columns entered Quito, but not before there were strong altercations and even burned tanks and police cars. Hundreds were arrested and injured in the fighting.

Despite the strong campaign of fear articulated



in social networks by conservative influencers, there was a multitude of gestures of solidarity in the humble neighborhoods of the Quito periphery to greet the arrival of the indigenous mobilization. The mobilization congregated in El Arbolito, the downtown Quito park where the historical events that ended up overthrowing governments during the decade of political instability that preceded the arrival of Rafael Correa to power, took place.

On October 8 and 9, numerous groups continued to arrive in Quito, while in the



The reasons above mentioned, as well as the diverse nature and intention of the indigenous organizations to represent the poor *and* well-off sectors, explain not only their oscillations but also their objective limitations to advance in the anti-capitalist struggle. The same factors explain the numerous crises that have affected the CONAIE: Jaime Vargas, CONAIE president since 2017 and fundamental protagonist of the October mobilizations, belongs to a new leadership that emerged against the previous leaders who were co-opted by the Lenin Moreno government.

Poor natives have been the ones to express the degree of discontent felt by the working classes

after the crisis caused by the fall in the price of oil, and the IMF austerity package. The rank-and-file dragged the leadership, and especially Vargas, to call the demonstrations, and other groups were integrated.

The political axis of the indigenous movement is the Plurinational State, and its economic axis is *sumak kawsay* (“good living” in Quechua), in reference to the ecological economic model defended by indigenous people, which includes the suspension of all oil and mining concessions. These measures are opposed by the more moderate sectors of the CONAIE, represented, among others, by Salvador Quispe, the confederation’s former president.

Vargas, then, emerges these days as the main leader, and has already expressed his willingness to run as a political alternative “*if the people ask for it.*” Of course, their role in the negotiation, the comings and goings, the hesitations and setbacks we describe in other articles, express the limitations of the CONAIE and the need for working people, together with the poor peasantry, the youth and the people, to self-organize under a program that continues down the path of the anti-capitalist struggle. ✊



rest of the country, various government facilities were occupied, roadblocks were maintained and even oil wells were occupied and shut down in the Amazon area. The last to arrive on the night of Thursday the 10th were another thousand indigenous people from Amazonian territories.

The cry was unison throughout the country: “The mobilization is indefinite until the national government repeals Decree 883 and the neo-liberal package, breaks with the IMF and Lenín Moreno resigns.” Meanwhile, in Quito, there were marches everywhere and at all hours, with gradually intensifying police repression. In the indigenous territories, and even in the capital, different military and National Police detachments were detained by protestors. All were then handed over to state authorities without harm or injury, while over a thousand protesters were arrested, over 500 were wounded and seven were killed by the night of October 12. During the days of mobilization, some of the detained policemen and soldiers were forced to carry the coffins of the fallen natives on their shoulders under the slogan: “feel the weight of our dead on your shoulders”.

A BROAD POPULAR MOBILIZATION

Two interesting phenomena occurred in the Ecuadorian capital: on the one hand, the strategy of influencers, generators of public opinion in various media, and several journalists disqualifying the indigenous movement in social networks, was palpable. On the other hand, in real life, solidarity with protesters was widespread. University students of all kinds of disciplines, especially Medicine and Nursing, maintained daily assistance to the injured on university campuses. In parallel, large sectors

of Quito society distributed blankets, clothes, shoes, food and water in the facilities where newcomers spent the night in the capital. Finally, a broad deployment of alternative media was created to cover the mobilizations that were being criminalized by the traditional media. The strategy of confronting white people with the dark-skinned inhabitants of the country’s rural areas did not work, nor did the attempt to frighten the well-off Quito classes to confront them with the poor from afar. In fact, according to a Cedatos poll (certainly not a leftist source), 76% of Ecuadorians support the indigenous demand to repeal Decree 883.

The marches were actively accompanied by thousands of poor youth from outlying neighborhoods, who did not respond to the leaders of the social movements. They convened themselves and confronted the repressive gangs with valor and a level of self-organization that moved the world.

On the afternoon of October 12, “Day of Interculturality and Plurinationality” in Ecuador, the national government, which on innumerable occasions had reiterated that Decree 883 was not open to discussion, was forced to give in and analyze its contents with the mobilized people. Hours earlier, the Quito women’s movement had taken to the streets with indigenous women declaring María Paula Romo, Minister of the Interior who defines herself as feminist, responsible for the repression and betrayal of the women’s movement.

A GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE ROPES

The announcement that the CONAIE leaders were meeting to analyze Lenín Moreno’s proposal to negotiate, demanding minimum guarantees and for the negotiation be public and broadcast by the media, was enough for the sensation that progress could be made and the IMF and government plans could be defeated to fill the streets of Quito with excitement. The night closed with a strong *cacerolazo* that spread throughout the city.

The demand for the repeal of the economic measures implemented by the government, showed that the Ecuadorian population as a whole had informed the president of the Republic that they were raising their voice in rejection of the government’s administration and its policies.

A PLAN TO STOP THE REVOLUTION

On the afternoon of Sunday, October 12, the negotiation was held between the government and different social leaders, with indigenous peoples and nationalities at the helm. Under the name of *tables for a peace agreement*, the government was forced to meet each of the indigenous prerequisites: the negotiation was broadcast live by various television networks and held in a hotel complex on the outskirts of the city, a neutral location. With the help of the UN and the Episcopal Conference of Ecuador, Lenín Moreno tried to stop the mobilization by calling for “dialogue”. To that end, he had the invaluable collaboration of the CONAIE leaders themselves, who, at the negotiation, only demanded the repeal of Decree 883 and committed to discussing a new decree, abandoning all the remaining demands.

After three hours of debate, the CONAIE agreed with President Moreno to withdraw Decree 883 in exchange for “*the return to peace*.” Moreno and his cabinet of ministers ended up accepting the repeal of the decree, but at the same time began arresting and persecuting the leaders of the mobilizations, ratified ministers Jarre and Romo in their posts and, seeking to recover the initiative, blamed *Correísmo* for the uprising and arrested some of its leaders with the excuse that they had been responsible for the mayhem. However, five days after the agreement, the CONAIE itself, pressed by its bases, announced its withdrawal from the “negotiation” until the repression ceases and an agenda of discussion of the entire economic plan is rewritten “with sincerity.”

A FIRST VICTORY AND AN UNCERTAIN OUTCOME

In the coming times, and to the extent that resistance is advancing throughout Latin America against the IMF’s plans, new battles will be waged in Ecuador. Lenín Moreno is hanging by a thread; the rest of the regime’s institutions, such as the National Assembly, are paralyzed. The armed forces have an internal crisis, *Correísmo* tries to distance itself from the situation, and the people return to the tradition of struggle that allowed them to win the first round of a long fight.

The main weakness of the process is the unfortunate role played by the trade union organizations of the divided Ecuadorian labor



movement: they have been absent or, worse, playing an ominous role. The old Stalinist leadership, especially the Maoists, who formerly led important trade union organizations, are now reduced to some sectors of public employees and did not call for centralizing any action. They barely put out a statement in the days after October 12, calling once more for *peace* and *national unity*.

The CUT, a trade union center promoted during *Correísmo*, has reached the extreme of negotiating with the Ministry of Labor. While thousands of indigenous people, young people, neighbors, social organizations and workers in general, were risking their lives by facing Lenín Moreno’s government, the CUT leaders met with Minister Madero, who announced: “*We have reached consensus with the CUT, which is part of the National Wages Council*”. CUT leaders Agustín Lindao and Richard Gómez said: “*The labor issue gets solved through dialogue*.”¹

For these reasons, it is indispensable for the courageous Ecuadorian people to overcome the weaknesses of a leadership that merely intends to “negotiate” and seek a political solution within the current institutional framework of the capitalist and semi-colonial state. Hence, the strenuous effort of our comrades in the search for an organization to centralize and promote the formation of new leaderships for these processes of struggle. We will continue to discuss with the best social fighters, with leaders of the working class and the poor peasantry, trying to articulate and continue the struggle to turn everything around and win the battle so that those who have never ruled, the workers and the people, may rule on the path to the socialist revolution. 🇪🇺

1. Newspaper *El Comercio*, 10/9/19.



FROM CORREA TO MORENO

The Keys to **THE UPRISING**

■ CARLOS CARCIONE

THE AGREEMENT WITH THE IMF, WHOSE MEASURE OF CANCELING FUEL SUBSIDIES LED TO OCTOBER'S UPRISING, BEGAN LAST MARCH, BUT HAS AN OLDER ORIGIN THAT NEEDS TO BE ANALYZED.

The Letter of Intent sent to Christine Lagarde on March 1, 2019¹ was an attempt to reestablish Ecuador's relationship with the IMF as a lender of last resort, since the country left it in 2009 and Correa had begun the process of returning to international financial organizations in 2014.

After over five years of economic stagnation, the immediate prospect of a recession and the pressure from the local and global capitalists that had become his main political base of support, led Lenín Moreno to seek IMF help support and the implementation of its plans, further advancing down a path that had already begun in the final

years of the "Citizen Revolution" government.

Ecuador has an economy without sovereign capacity due to having renounced its own currency and tying its destiny to the dollar. It thus lacked tools to maneuver against the impact of the global capitalist crisis.² The dollarization publicly announced in January 2000, and the closing of the cycle of extraordinary oil and raw material prices, led to an economic stagnation that left the relative growth of the previous five-year period behind.

In this context, the question was to decide who would pay for the effects of the country's crisis. As the Correa government had already done, Moreno's decided that the costs would be paid by workers, the indigenous peasantry, and other popular sectors. The 2019 agreement with the IMF included the requirement to eliminate fuel subsidies, but that is not the only counter-reform that Moreno proposed. The agreement with the Fund, which was not rejected by the government,

despite having withdrawn Decree 883 as a concession to the October rebellion, is one of the fundamental keys that gave rise to that uprising.

PROMISES AND REALITY OF THE “CITIZEN REVOLUTION”

Correa rose to power with proposals adapted to the country and the continent’s convulsive reality in the context of the XX century’s last decade and of the twenty-first century’s first decade.³ These included denouncing the illegitimacy of the external debt, rejecting the country’s submission to the IMF, ending privatizations and even eliminating labor flexibility, which were written into the new Constitution adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Montecristi in 2008.

Though the government never proposed recovering monetary sovereignty by ending the country’s dollarization and reinstating the national currency, its initiative to audit the public debt generated expectations that were quickly unmet and led to disappointment. This audit is perhaps one of the most emblematic examples of the distance between the promises and the reality of the Correa government. The commission responsible for carrying out the audit demonstrated that the Ecuadorian debt was, in its absolute majority, illegitimate

and illegal, and should therefore be rejected. However, the government decided to buy it back⁴, legitimizing what had just been proven to be a scam.

The evolution of the Ecuadorian capitalism’s “modernization” initiated by Rafael Correa ranges from ratifying the oil and mining extractivist model to rejecting agrarian reform, reinitiating the privatization of ripe oil deposits, among many other measures that were prohibited or protected by the Constitution of Montecristi and that Correa himself had defined as *treason to the homeland* in 2005. On the other hand, instead of strengthening the public health care system and making it universal, the state, the country’s main employer, contracted insurance policies from private clinics and hospitals, weakening public health care and facilitating a rising inequality in this basic right. This political course advanced towards the middle of Correa’s third term, when, in response to oil prices beginning to fall in 2014, he took the country back to the IMF, in compliance with international private lenders’ conditions to give Ecuador new loans.

Justified by the falling oil prices, the Correa government also began a policy of fiscal austerity, complementary to the growing external debt. The protection of labor rights was eliminated this way, for example, justifying salary reductions on the basis of reductions in



working hours, a measure that benefits private companies; a drastic reduction of raises of the minimum wage; the elimination of the right to severance pay with the excuse of having implemented unemployment insurance. Similarly, the government's VAT (sales tax) hikes to reduce the fiscal deficit and guarantee payment of the new debt affected the people that live on their salary.

While these austerity measures that lowered Ecuadorian's standard of living were developed, banks and large corporations obtained multi-million dollar profits. For example, between 2015 and 2018, the top 30 companies recorded profits of \$ 4.9 billion and the financial system obtained nearly \$ 1.8 billion in profits. This is Correa's economic legacy: stagnation, growing

external debt, falling living standards of workers and the people, and exorbitant gains for the most concentrated capitalist groups.

But there is another legacy that the Correa period leaves and was strengthened by the current government: the repression and persecution of the social sectors that opposed the regressive changes promoted by the "Citizen Revolution", and the limitation of democratic rights. This change led to the CONAIE (see "What is the CONAIE?") and other social movements and sectors of the population openly breaking with Correa. These reactionary policies, together with the deterioration of the economy and people's living standards, explain why Correa's party was unable to win the 2018 presidential election in the first round and managed to get Lenín Moreno elected

The 2019 Rebellion Resumes the Historical Thread of Popular Struggle

■ C. C.

The indigenous, peasant and popular rebellion that developed in the first half of October will be remembered as the uprising that finished consolidating the re-entry of the global process of struggle in South America.

In Ecuador, the popular, indigenous, peasant, student and working class movement was the protagonist of a long period of uprisings that overthrew three presidents, and promoted rebellions. The CONAIE was one of the main references among the various social movements that led those struggles. Through the indigenous Pachakutik party, it participated in elections and reached the old parliament, mounted on the ascending process. It integrated a triumvirate government that was overthrown, and participated with ministers in other governments. This process took place from 1990 until the XXI Century, with the arrival of the "Citizen Revolution", a local expression of the Bolivarian wave that crossed the continent during the first decade of this century.

A brief review of these struggles shows a huge accumulation of experience and, though it was numbed for a period, it reappeared in the 2019 process, resuming the rise of popular struggles. It does so with strengths and weaknesses: with leaderships like those of the CONAIE and other social movements, that repeat their practices of hesitant conciliation, and with a mass movement

that ratifies its power, courage and determination to fight and has, on several occasions, replaced leaders in the heat of the struggle.

From the Capture of the Cathedral to the Outlaw Revolution

The first great indigenous and peasant rebellion in modern Ecuador took place in May 1990, when a group of indigenous people occupied the Quito Cathedral, demanding their right to land. Outside, the CONAIE, founded in 1986, called for a general mobilization with road blockades and marches until President Rodrigo Borja summoned a negotiation to deal with the demands. Though these were only partially met, the first major test of strength that led to more than a decade of struggles, popular uprisings and governments falling had been carried out.

The other major movements, on the threshold of the XXI century, went against the policies of the IMF promoted by presidents Abdala Bucaram, Jalil Mahuad and Lucio Gutiérrez.

Bucaram managed to get elected president in 1996, the third time he ran. He won the election by rejecting the local oligarchy, with a discourse against traditional politicians and the discredited political system. But as soon as he took office, hiding his measures of submission to the IMF behind the implementation of a popular housing plan, he launched a plan of privatizations and

by a minimal margin in the second. The same issues also explain the government's defeat in the popular consultation and referendum of 2018, in which Correa campaigned supporting a "No" vote against Moreno's position.

LENÍN MORENO'S BETRAYAL

The poor electoral result that led him to the presidency made Lenín Moreno's government weak from the start. Forced to apply austerity to boost a stagnant economy, pressured by the large capitalist sectors, and by Correa's own political pressure that cast a long shadow over him, Moreno took a turn: he sought the support of right-wing politicians, like Abdala Bucaram

increases of gas and fuel prices by eliminating subsidies for the population's consumption. At the same time, he sought and received advice from Domingo Cavallo, the former Argentine Economy Minister, to implement a system similar to the convertibility of the peso, which failed. The revolt erupted six months after his inauguration, forcing him to resign. Indigenous people joined the uprising, but it was essentially an urban revolt of students and workers. This uprising was capitalized by traditional parties.

Mahuad, who was elected in 1998 suffered a similar demise. In January 2000, after having implemented the dollarization of the Ecuadorian economy through an agreement with the IMF, he tried to apply an austerity plan and eliminate fuel subsidies. This ended up unleashing a popular uprising involving indigenous people and peasants from the start, together with a sector of the armed forces with a nationalist speech, led by Colonel Lucio Gutierrez.

To lead this process, a triumvirate that integrated the indigenous Pachakutik party was formed. Shortly after, this party left the government, disarticulating the triumvirate, because Gutierrez did not fulfill his commitments to the natives. He was separated from office due to accusations of corruption, but returned to the government two years later, this time to implement the IMF's plans. A powerful popular rebellion, known as the "Outlaw Revolution", forced the government to step down. The indigenous movement did not support it politically and did not participate in this rebellion.

and Nebot, and, taking advantage of his mentor's eroded base of support, organized a referendum whose objective was to avoid the possibility of Correa returning to government. He jailed his own vice president, Jorge Glas, who was more loyal to Correa, and began a judicial persecution of the former president, forcing him into exile.

In this context, Moreno took the two legacies of *Correísmo* to the extreme: economic



The relative stability achieved during Rafael Correa's governments was initially supported by the social movements. However, the indigenous movement clashed several times with him over the Water Bill, rejected by the CONAIE as a privatization. The traditional organizations of the labor movement lost strength, and some sectors were co-opted, while others, such as the teachers' unions, were divided and weakened by Correa's policies. The relative social advances achieved during the "Citizen Revolution", the co-optation by the state of sectors of the social movements, and the persecution of others, resulted in the appearance of privileged layers in the labor movement and popular sectors, which limited and weakened the process of organization and struggle.

The CONAIE, at odds with Correa, supported the Lenín Moreno government at first. But that support eroded, until the uprising in response to the elimination of the fuel subsidy. Beyond the hesitations of its leadership, the repeal of Decree 883 opened a new stage in which the mass movement recovers its tradition of social and political struggle, and raises new opportunities to renew the leaderships of the labor and social movements. Above all, it is more favorable for the construction of a revolutionary anti-capitalist and socialist political



austerity - now in the hands of the IMF and the US - and a reactionary management of the state, as we saw in the ruthless repression during the October uprising and with the persecution of *Correista* leaders and then CONAIE leaders and activists.

AUSTERITY PACKAGE AND REBELLION

The Moreno government's objective was to access new loans from different international and regional organizations through the IMF, with the promise that, once the loans were received and the brutal austerity that the IMF requires applied, the economy would grow again. But, as Alberto Acosta (former minister

of Correa's first term, who broke with him in 2009) reveals, the loans that Moreno sought do not have clear objectives. Acosta says: *"Indeed, Lenin Moreno announced that the agreement with the IMF would open the door to new loans for 6.7 billion dollars from the World Bank, the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Latin American Reserve Fund (FLAR). Of those resources, 4,600 million would be received in 2019, 3,150 million in 2020 and 2,500 million in 2021. Of the total amount to be received, which would reach about 10,200 million dollars, 3,500 million would be for projects (not yet specified), while 6,700 million would be freely available. Neither the conditions nor the characteristics of these loans have yet been explained in detail."*

What we do know is what the austerity measures requested by the IMF for Ecuador to achieve an acceptable fiscal balance and obtain those loans are. It is a typical plan of austerity and surrender of resources, of which the elimination of fuel subsidies was just one measure. Some others are: a reduction of wages and increase of labor flexibility, a raise in the most regressive taxes such as the VAT, the privatization of oil fields, hydroelectric

Brutal Repression and Persecution of Opponents

■ A. G.

The repression and authoritarianism of Lenin Moreno's government during the October mobilizations left a high cost: more than 20 dead, according to different sources, 1,340 injured and 1,152 detained, all accused of terrorism. Health care professionals were persecuted and public and maternity hospitals were attacked. As we can see, the repression exercised was brutal, and, if there is any terrorism, it is the terrorism of the state making excessive use of its force.

After the October protests, persecution of the rebellion leaders continued, and the government seized the opportunity to selectively attack some *Correista* leaders, such as the prefect of Pichincha, Paola Pabón, the former president of the National Assembly, Gabriela Rivadeneira, and former assemblyman Virgilio Hernández, who join the

long-standing detention of former Vice President, Jorge Glas.

From the ISL, we demand the cessation of attacks on the Ecuadorian people and an independent commission to investigate the murders and detentions.

Likewise, and despite the differences we have often expressed with *Correísmo*, we also demand that the persecution of all political opponents be terminated. We do not recognize the illegitimate government of Lenin Moreno, or any of its institutions, any authority to judge anyone. Only popular organizations will be able to determine what responsibility the different actors in Ecuadorian politics should assume in the development of the crisis.

Meanwhile, we join the demand for the freedom of all political prisoners in Ecuador and the cessation of persecution of opponents and fighters. ✊

plants, more than 20 electricity distribution companies, refineries and the Pacific Bank. All of this in addition to the usual “austerity” measures to reduce public investment to a minimum, threatening the supply of medicines, for example.

Clearly, this is a plan of integral austerity, of capturing public patrimony, of plunder and of expanding extractivism, attacking the population’s standard of living, expanding social inequality, and dismantling the social policies carried over from Correa’s first period.

HAVING DEFEATED DECREE 833, MOBILIZE AND ORGANIZE TO DEFEAT AUSTERITY AND THE MODEL

The Lenín Moreno government’s retreat from implementing Decree 833, which enabled the elimination of fuel subsidies, to replace it with another decree to be agreed on with the CONAIE, has not closed the Ecuadorian people’s period of mobilization and struggle. On the contrary, it raises the possibility that the entire austerity plan will be confronted.

In our opinion, the victory obtained is relative, even contradictory, because - as was demonstrated in the days of struggle in October - there was sufficient strength and conditions to throw out the entire austerity plan, as well as the government itself, and to impose a new constituent process to redesign the whole country in favor of workers, peasants and the indigenous people. Even so, the reversal of the decree and the subsequent withdrawal of the CONAIE from the negotiation with the government can only be read as a triumph of the mass movement, achieved in spite of the fact that the leadership of the process defected, once again.

The indigenous people, the peasants and even

the workers who participated in the rebellion are galvanized. That strength can grow and develop if, in the process of assessing events and the mobilization, new anti-bureaucratic leaders emerge to contest the leadership of the CONAIE and democratize it, to take on the task of reestablishing all labor and social organizations so they will stop being appendages of power and will once again represent the interests of workers and the people of Ecuador.

The remaining task is to defeat the global agreement with the IMF, but we must strive for more. Natural resources, today in the hands of multinationals that enrich themselves by impoverishing the people and destroying nature, must be recovered. The political caste that contends for state control, but does so at the service of its own interests, must be done away with. We are talking about sovereign economic planning, ignoring the external debt, breaking the bond with the dollar, and of deeply connecting with the continent to advance to a new scheme of solidarity-based integration in the Americas. This orientation is in the perspective of doing away with the dependent capitalist system and moving towards a different, anti-capitalist and socialist model, a model that Correa never sought to build and that Lenín Moreno came to eliminate as a possibility.

For that purpose, it is not possible to trust those who had the opportunity and squandered it for over a decade, opening the door of power to right wing “traitors”. What we need to do is to build, in the heat of the popular mobilization, a new socialist and revolutionary organization capable of organizing the enormous strength that the Ecuadorian people have and to prepare for the battles that are coming in Ecuador, and throughout the continent. The ISL is on that path. ✊





ARGENTINA AFTER THE ELECTIONS

Political Changes and THE STRATEGIES OF THE LEFT

■ SERGIO GARCÍA, MST LEADER AND MEMBER OF THE FIT - UNIDAD NATIONAL BOARD

MACRI IS EXITING, ALBERTO FERNÁNDEZ IS ABOUT TO ENTER, BUT THE IMF CONTINUES. THERE WILL BE CHANGES AND CONTINUITY. WHAT GOVERNMENT AND REGIME ARE WE HEADING TOWARDS? WHAT SOCIAL RESPONSES WILL THERE BE? AMIDST THE POLARIZATION, THE FIT-UNIDAD ACHIEVED A SIGNIFICANT VOTE, BUT FELL BACK A FEW STEPS. OUR PROPOSALS TO ADVANCE.

Macri and his political coalition have just lost the national election and this is not a minor issue: the project designed and mounted by the great pro-imperialist bourgeoisie to execute the structural changes they needed and, at the same time, secure

Argentina, along with Bolsonaro's Brazil, as allies of US policies in the region, exits the government. With their electoral defeat, those reactionary changes are stalled halfway. And, in these four years they have not been able to take the mass movement out of the streets: albeit with inconsistencies, the resistance and the confrontation of the austerity plan were expressed several times.

In fact, Macri's defeat was reflected electorally now because the old union bureaucracy and the PJ¹ diverted the great rise in struggle of late 2017, when thousands confronted the labour and pension reforms. That was the beginning of the end for this government: it never managed to recover from those

days. It did not fall earlier because his trade union and political allies held it in place, but it ended up defeated because its relationship with a broad sector of society was broken and it was unable to recover support for its project.

Macri's departure from the presidency is a political blow to US intentions and plans in the region, which attempted to recompose its political and economic power in the continent through the Lima Group, with Macri, Bolsonaro, Piñera, and Duque of Colombia. With Macri, the US is losing an important ally and an obedient minion. Out of pure pragmatism, Trump and Fernandez already had a friendly telephone conversation. The US president will now try to reach a new political and economic agreement with the Peronist government, which, like so many other times, even with double speak, will be willing to accept.

PERONISM IN POWER: SIGNS OF CHANGE, DECISIONS OF CONTINUITY

Though he has not officially been sworn in, Fernandez is already acting and travelling as the Argentinian president. He has recently met in Mexico with AMLO. At that meeting, he gave a glimpse into his new political architecture, which has many convenient phrases but no significant changes. He showed himself willing to look for a progressive cooperation in the region, and also hinted that he would not leave the reactionary Lima Group. He plays it ambiguously, trying to show changes while not breaking away from the imperialist powers.

On this base, he is on his way to a re-negotiation with the IMF, a crucial issue for the upcoming times. The Fund asks for a clear plan of payments and interest guarantees, and more decision power over the structural changes it seeks in order to approve new deliveries of money. The US asks for Argentina to comply with the IMF, and Fernandez wants to comply with the entire external debt, though he knows that, in his discourse, he has to contain his electoral base, which voted against the IMF's austerity and expects important changes. The country will navigate through that unstable equilibrium in the following months. Needless to say, the IMF does not sign deals that are not useful to its policies: it wants its members and associates tied to its plans.

Between the internal and external debt in dollars, Argentina has deadlines totalling 140

billion dollars for the next four years. Fernandez and the PJ have already declared that they will comply. Evidently, if they do, they will not meet the social demands of the combative Argentinian people. Through these tense contradictions, discontent will accumulate, and its first expressions will not take long to emerge.

The PJ and Fernández are going to be facing very difficult times and they are aware of it. That is why they promote a social pact between employers, the union bureaucracy, and the churches. Through this pact, they intend to contain people's demands for a long period, a scheme that does not exclude the possibility of the Peronist bureaucracy, with its unions, acting as a repressive apparatus against the processes of struggle that may emerge from below.



In parallel, Fernández is already organizing meetings with governors, investors and big companies around two main priorities - both implying a high level of continuity - that he says will be his "motors": Vaca Muerta for oil exploitation, in order to attract new million-dollar investments at the expense of a greater surrender of resources, environmental destruction and militarization of the region; and large scale mining, for that sector's corporations, who are experts in liquidating entire areas at the service of their profit.

In these issues, as well as in his endorsement of the external debt fraud, and his direct relationship with the Vatican and its reactionary agenda, the characteristics of the government of Fernández and the PJ become clear. At the same time, these official priorities will spark

disillusion and new waves of struggles and political debates that will begin sooner rather than later.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEFT'S ELECTORAL RESULTS

The elections took place in an exacerbated process of polarization, promoted by the government and the PJ, and induced by the mass media. Therefore, they practically became a run-off election, with little space for the remaining forces. In this more than difficult context for socialist and anti-capitalist forces, what predominated was a “lesser evil” and punishment vote against Macrism on one hand, and its also massive counter-effect against the return of Peronism. In both tendencies, the left saw its electoral flow slightly reduced. The FIT-Unidad presidential candidacy surpassed 2% with over 600.000 votes, and the legislative positions obtained a slightly higher amount (800.000). Sadly, we fell short of electing a national representative by a small margin, though we did obtain a seat in the legislature of the City of Buenos Aires, in addition to several provincial representatives and councillors that we elected a few months ago in Neuquén and Córdoba.

For a better understanding of the left's electoral reality today, we cannot reduce the analysis of the results to the objective causes. Every serious and critical evaluation must also take into account the relevance of the subjective factor, meaning the policies of the left in the previous years and months. Taking this into consideration is the only way to correctly and integrally obtain an understanding of the revolutionary left's electoral situation.

From this perspective, we cannot ignore that the FIT of the previous years (PTS-PO-IS) had a great opportunity at its best moment that it did not manage to take advantage of. After reaching

important peaks of electoral support and counting with a high level of social, trade union and academic support, it did not respond to its own reality in the only way it should have: opening their front to lead a greater unity of the left, and breaking out of the limited electoral terrain and extending that unity to a joint intervention in the class struggle.

It only decided to take this indispensable unitary path this year, and on the verge of the deadline for presenting alliances, losing valuable political time by presenting separate lists in many provincial elections during the first half of the year. After this, we were able to reach an agreement and, with the incorporation of our MST, advance in the formation of the FIT-Unidad. Several media outlets spread this great news under the title “a historic unity of the left”, when there was already a dynamic, not of ascent, but of political-electoral retreat.

It is worth noting that the conformation of the FIT-Unidad was very necessary and positive, yet late. This conditioned our chances of reaching the August primary elections in much better shape. From that point, the dynamic of polarization did the rest, in addition to some partial mistakes during the campaign, within the framework of a very successful policy in general. As we evaluated at the FIT-Unidad National Board, the campaign was the most left wing and politically correct one since 2011.

Summarizing, on the basis of all the positive points, we also highlight a critical vision of different aspects. We will go over conclusions from previous years and the present, with the conviction that not forgetting important critical aspects must be positively useful for our political response to future challenges. Our central task is to collaborate with qualitatively improving our unity of the left is a central task.

THE FIT-UNIDAD: ADVANCES AND LIMITS TO OVERCOME

The elections have passed and the time for assessments is also coming to an end. However, for those who analyse reality to understand it better and fight in better conditions to transform it, the relationship between assessments and future tasks has a unique value. We believe that the present, and especially the future of the FIT-Unidad, is linked to the development of a combination of political factors that depend on the members of our front.

On one hand, we vindicate the formation of the FIT-Unidad, and plan to maintain and



improve it. To this end, we have a comprehensive anti-capitalist and socialist political program, the foundation and outline of our unitary construction. This program passed the test of the electoral battle and that is why we were the only political option with proposals that constituted a clear alternative to the candidates of the system and the capitalist regime. In the campaign, our main public figures accompanied every struggle. Del Caño and Del Plá, from the presidential formula, with candidates like Cele Fierro, Alejandro Bodart and Vilma Ripoll of our MST, Bregman and many others, were spokespeople and militants of anti-capitalist and socialist politics throughout the campaign. We also held a historic event on 9 de Julio Avenue, with thousands and thousands of militants and supporters, and organized the closing rally of our campaign in support of the Chilean people, in front of the consulate, highlighting, on the last day of the campaign, on which side we stand and what our commitments are.

These clearly positive and meritorious achievements, must be combined in the future with the modification of some essential issues that have to be reconsidered if we want to break the current dynamic of electoral retreat, and embark on a new path of growth in different aspects. Hence, the importance of a proper assessment and of being consequential with it. It is equally important to relaunch our front on new bases, that we sum up in the following points:

- We propose that this great unity of the left act as a permanent political front, and not only during electoral months. That we try to answer politically to every event in a unitary way, showcasing our front, and disseminating our opinions and proposals. We have to avoid the trends that, in one way or another, lead to electoralist conceptions, because we need something qualitatively different and superior.
- With the same goal in mind, this shift must be extended to our intervention in the processes of the class struggle, in the working class with the unity and coordination of combative unionism, in the feminist and LGBT+ movement, and in the rise of the environmentalist struggle, among the youth and the unemployed. There cannot be a separation between our intervention in the social struggles and the political struggle: they are part of the same strategy; separating them weakens our intervention in both.



- We also believe that we must have a policy of extension and renewal of our front, on the basis of democratizing debates, our organizational methods, and our active relationship with the intellectual, environmental, social, feminist and LGBT + leaders, and groups and organizations that defend our policy and program. We need to turn the FIT-Unidad outwards to strongly reposition it.
- On this political and methodological basis of joint action during 2020, it is also imperative to democratize the preparation of slates for the 2021 elections, through fair and realistic agreements, internal elections or another democratic mechanism to guarantee that we all are protagonists, and to fully utilize the strength and public figures of each organization.

We pose these debates, among others, in our front, as a contribution to the strengthening of the FIT-Unidad for the upcoming period and the challenges we will face. It is necessary to turn this unity into a project that - backed by the mobilization, the working class, the youth, feminism and popular sectors - radically presents itself as a political alternative, attracting new sectors, renewing and expanding to present the mass movement with a working class, socialist and anti-capitalist politics.

ARGENTINA, THE REGIONAL CONTEXT AND OUR STRATEGIC CHALLENGES.

As everyone can see, there is a new ascent of the class struggle in our region. It manifests itself in various ways and with logical inequalities, in a combination of a rising class struggle with social and political polarization. Its dynamic was marked first by Ecuador and then by Chile, as the main processes. Nonetheless, it is a more widespread phenomenon of ascent, with manifestations in Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, Argentina, expressions of repudiation of Bolsonaro in Brazil, the political crisis in Peru, and let's not forget Puerto Rico's

recent enormous feat that overthrew a government. And this is happening in other regions of the world as well.

Political change in Argentina will find, as long as the austerity plan continues, new expressions of the class struggle and working class and popular resistance; possibly, also, of the youth and the feminist movement, which has grown to large scale proportions in our country. There is no doubt that this will happen and it will enrich an ongoing regional uprising.

It is precisely in this framework that we, as revolutionaries, have important opportunities and political challenges ahead of us. If there is something that unites the tasks and perspectives of Chile, Ecuador, Brazil and Argentina, it is the imperative need to strengthen the anti-capitalist and socialist political alternatives that struggle for a workers' government. Strengthening struggles that these peoples lead in the political field must be a priority and a strategic task, as our comrades of the Movimiento Anticapitalista do in Chile, growing as a revolutionary organization while seeking a political articulation with other anti-capitalist groups. There are efforts by sectors of the left wing of the PSOL in Brazil to give that party an anti-capitalist and socialist course, struggling against its conciliatory tendencies. And we are doing our part in Argentina, building the MST and being an active part of the FIT-Unidad, which received international support from an important number of organizations and individuals in this campaign, something that we deeply appreciate. In our

country, thanks to Trotskyism's strong tradition, and the important accumulation of cadres and militants trained in revolutionary Marxism, the possibilities can be even greater and, logically, the responsibilities, as well. Whether the FIT-Unidad rises to the occasion in this new political stage, depends on the policies and orientations of our own front. That is why, from the MST, we raise proposals and will insist on making changes to be applied in practice, strengthening the political struggle of the left against the political forces of the regime and the possibilist, reformist and skeptical theories that stand in the way of the leap we need to take.

If this great unity of the left that we have built can improve itself, surpassing its limitations and problems, we will be a great contribution to the regional struggle against the capitalists' plans. This is our political objective. In the upcoming period, we will strengthen the MST nationally as a revolutionary party more inserted in the working class and the youth, in order to be as strong as possible in promoting socialist, feminist, internationalist and working class politics. As the Argentine section of the ISL, we accept this responsibility in the upcoming challenges. We invite the activists, the vanguard and the left wing electoral base that accompanied us these months in different activities, to join us in the construction of this militant and revolutionary political tool. ✊

1. Partido Justicialista, traditional Peronist bourgeois party.





BRAZIL: BOLSONARO, LULA AND THE DEBATES ON THE LEFT

Anti-Capitalism is THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE

■ VERÓNICA O'KELLY, ALTERNATIVA SOCIALISTA

AS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THE “LESSER EVIL” DEBATE IS ALSO PRESENTED HERE. POSSIBILISM, AS A CURRENT EXPRESSION OF THE CAMPIST RECIPE, INVITES US TO FORM POLITICAL ALLIANCES TO FACE A “GREATER EVIL”.

The problem is that this recipe offers nothing new (or good) on the horizon. For example, Bolsonaro in power is explained by the masses' disappointment with the PT (Workers Party). The (not longer so) workers' party, betrayed its historical program shortly after taking office. It became the guarantor of the capitalist corporations' business in the country and the cities. That betrayal generated an immense rupture with its social base, and this base confronted many austerity measures against the people, with the youth at the forefront of these processes of struggle. Thus, the right seized the opportunity and vied for power with one the most harmful elements it had: Jair Bolsonaro.

Examples of the experiences of pseudo progressive governments, such as that of Lula and Dilma's PT, have demonstrated not only their limitations in responding to the needs of our class, youth and people, but also the commitments they made, and still maintain, with imperialist plans in each country.

The PSOL (Socialism and Liberty Party) is no stranger to these debates and, in relation to the upcoming elections, some comrades advocate creating alliances with the PT, the PCdoB (Communist Party of Brazil), or the PDT (Democratic Labor Party), to face the conservative advance. Our position is the opposite: we ratify the need to build a political alternative with class independence to confront Bolsonaro and his plan against the people. In the struggles and in the streets, we promote the broadest unity in action; but a political front with those who manage capitalism is unfeasible



if we intend to govern with a feminist, eco-socialist, anti-capitalist and socialist program, and not betray it along the way.

AN UNCONVINCING FASCIST PROFILE

Another axis of debate is about how strong or weak the Bolsonaro government is. In a world marked by an ascent of mobilization and an increasingly acute polarization, Bolsonaro tries to revive and update a fascist profile that fails to overcome the barriers of its own intentions. Days ago, Bivar, a leader of the president's party, the PSL (Social Liberal Party), clarified that there are two internal sectors: a purely liberal one, and a radical conservative one, represented by Bolsonaro and his "clan."¹

The government's dynamic less than a year after taking office, is one of crisis. The bourgeois sectors that navigate in the rough waters of the capitalist system in crisis, need more radical austerity policies, and pressure the government to apply them. While today's Brazil shows a scenario of social inequality, job insecurity, rising unemployment, rising cost of living and advancing poverty rates, it is far from being the country that corporations need to secure their profits: they need more austerity and this is what Bolsonaro is not guaranteeing.

His model is not enough to discipline our class. This is why new conflicts, struggles and strikes of workers, women, students, native peoples or

environmentalists arise every day. In all these processes, the slogan *Fora Bolsonaro!* is raised with increasing strength.

INDEPENDENT, ANTI-CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST

In this scenario of ascending mobilization, the right does not stand idly by, it tries to recover lost ground. Lula's liberation occurs at a time of retreat of Bolsonaro's right-wing government, Macri's electoral defeat, and the rebellions in Chile, Ecuador and Haiti. Unfortunately, due to the mistakes made by Evo and the MAS, the Bolivian right - sponsored by the OAS - carried out a coup and tries to resume the initiative and counterattack against the Latin American rebellions from that bastion. That is why we affirm that the parties that formed pseudo progressive governments and political alternatives of class conciliation do not work, and lead us to new failures that the right is always willing to take advantage of.

With Lula freed, the debate about unity in a common political front to beat Bolsonaro is posed with greater strength. But, as we said before, trying to oppose the right with other managers of capitalism is no alternative. Against a radicalized right, a more anti-capitalist, radical, independent, and socialist left is needed.

This is the path we embarked on with the PSOL when we left the PT due to its betrayal. This is the path that the process of increasingly massive mobilizations across the world indicates is the correct one. The struggles, with women and the youth in the vanguard, radicalizing its program and its methods, unleashing unstoppable rebellions, such as those in Hong Kong or Chile, mark the way. Our victory or defeat will be decided on the battlefield against capital, not weaving alliances with it. ✊



1. Interview at the *Em Foco* program of Globo News, 10/31/19.

Iran: A Rebellion REBORN FROM THE ASHES

■ GHADER ANARI

A REBELLION SPARKED BY A HIKE IN THE PRICE OF GASOLINE BEGAN THIS WEEK IN IRAN. THE PROTESTS, WHICH STARTED IN THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE OF KHUZESTAN, HAVE SPREAD TO ALMOST ALL THE COUNTRY'S STATES AND CITIES.



Gasoline prices soaring up to triple their previous rates caused the masses to pour into the streets. But as soon as the protests began, slogans went beyond the anger against the gasoline hike and targeted the regime. In an interview he gave two days before the protests began, the Minister of Petroleum replied to a question about how much the government would raise the price of oil, saying: “up to the level that the people keep silent”. Nevertheless, two days after this statement, the Iranian people poured into streets and proved that they will raise their voice.

THE PRICE HIKE AND INFLATION

With the new petrol hike, drivers are entitled to a price of 15,000 rials (US \$ 0.13) per liter for the first 60 liters of each month. The price for each liter after 60 will be 30 thousand rials (0.26 US dollars). Before the hike, drivers had the right to buy 250 liters of gasoline at 10 thousand rials per liter. It is also known that the gasoline hike is the beginning of a new wave of raises in the price of all basic goods; that means a general inflation raise. The main reason behind the rebellion sparked by the price hike is that Iran has already been experiencing high inflation for a long time.

THE PROTESTS

Twelve banks in the city of Behbahan, 15 banks in the city of Karaj, the National Bank of Iran, and many private banks in numerous places were set on fire by protesters. Cars blocked highways and traffic was stopped by pouring sand onto the roads.

These radical mobilizations of the masses pouring into the streets, motivated by anger against intense exploitation, oppression and the economic crisis, shook the country.

Although the regime conceals the number of people who lost their lives in the protests, it has been reported that at least 15 people have been killed so far. In contrast with the 2017-18 protest wave, the regime has been more aggressive this time.

The protests attracted all sub-classes in urban centers. Workers, artisans and the Bazaar (Tehran), students, and large sectors of laborers take part in the protests.

Despite the current harsh weather conditions in Iran, with cold and snow, people take to the streets for long hours and do not return home.

THE REBELLION TARGETS THE REGIME

In December 2017, the “bread and freedom rebellion” took place in Iran, in almost all cities. After weeks of protests, the masses had to withdraw, but in many places there were ongoing aftershocks and social movements. Now, with the experience of recent years, the working people of Iran have been reborn from the ashes and poured into the streets again. This time, the protests are more massive and the capacity of resistance is higher.

Unlike the 2017 protests, the masses, instead of retreating against the police and the military, attack the institutions identified with the regime of oppression and exploitation, such as police stations and banks. It is important for the Iranian people, who are struggling with poverty, economic crisis, inflation, and unemployment,



to adopt a political attitude towards the regime. The decades-old Mullah regime is based on exploitation and repression. In recent years, economic problems have increased with the impact of the crisis. The gasoline hike was the last straw.

With its members living in luxury, and the huge income gap and inequality it created, the rotten regime paved the way for a massive political break of the Iranian people. In Iran, where there will be no change without targeting the Mullah's system, the materialization of this political break was an important forward.

Compared to the 2017-18 protests, the massiveness and radicalism of current protests show that the struggle of the working class against the regime is progressing.

AN UNTIED KNOT: UNORGANIZED MASSES

The biggest deficiency of the social struggle in Iran is the absence of an organized alternative. Although the socialist left is weak and scattered, a solidarity movement developed to support the workers' struggle. But it is hard to say that a unity has formed.

Similarly, the liberal, pro-Shah, and Islamist wings of the opposition do not have organized forces in the country either. Moreover, the opposition of these groups is more in favor of imperialist interventions, etc. than a radical mass movement. In this case, it would be right to say that the left, which is the only political force that could lead the mass movement in Iran, has insufficient physical capacity.

For this reason, an organized alternative must be developed in the heat of the struggle in order for the masses to obtain a victory. This task is difficult, but without effort, it is impossible.

THE INTERNATIONAL PROTEST WAVE

In recent months, social upheavals and rebellions have been developing around the world, from France to Chile, from Iraq to Lebanon. This process is not independent of the global crisis of the capitalist system. All over the world, the economic crisis, unemployment, poverty and lack of a future cause mass uprisings.

The rebellion in Iran must be understood as an accumulation of anger, which had already generated two previous waves of protest, and as a part of the international social movements.

The ongoing economic crisis in Iran is both due to the sanctions imposed by the US, and the structural economic crisis that shakes the world in general. In other words, developments in Iran cannot be read independently from the crisis of the international imperialist capitalist system.

The causes and development of social uprisings and their weaknesses are similar everywhere. The masses that take to the streets in Iraq, Lebanon, Chile, France and, finally, Iran have difficulties in achieving victory because they lack an organized vanguard.

In the face of these international developments, our struggle must be internationalist as well. Now is the time to organize an international struggle, while protests are shaking the world! 🌍✊



WHERE WILL THE REBELLIONS GO

in Iraq and Lebanon?

■ EMRE GÜNTEKIN

IN IRAQ AND LEBANON, MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS, LABORERS AND THE YOUTH HAVE BEEN ON THE STREETS FOR OVER A MONTH DESPITE FACING DEATH AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A CIVIL WAR EVERY DAY; ESPECIALLY IN LEBANON, DUE TO THE COUNTRY'S SENSITIVE ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS BALANCES.

Both countries have a similar history: Iraq lived under Saddam Hussein's bloody tyranny for decades and then an imperialist occupation which was even worse than the dictatorship regime. Lebanon, on the other hand, lost decades and hundreds of thousands of lives in a bloody civil war. All these years, there was not even hope for the slightest change in the lives of

both countries, until the actions that began last month. Millions of people find no escape from the social conditions into which they are pushed in almost every region, from Chile to Iraq, except to rebel against those who force them into misery while they themselves live in wealth. If there is a glimmer of hope for the future, it is the wave of rebellion that has developed from Latin America to the Middle East.

About nine years ago, the Arab geography witnessed a wave of rebellion against decades-old oppressive regimes, corruption, and the grave problems caused by neoliberal policies. Following the immolation of Mohammed Buazizi, who was an unemployed university graduate, Tunisian laborers rebelled against

Zeynel Abidin Bin Ali, who had ruled the country with an iron fist for 23 years, and succeeded in overthrowing him. This rebellion quickly spread to other North African countries, which were almost identical copies in terms of their social conditions.

The overthrow of Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak in January 2011, showed that decades of reigns in the region were actually ending. However, in the following days, imperialist interventions in the just rebellions of the peoples of the region were carried out in Libya and then in Syria. This led to a rapid manipulation of the protest wave, using identity conflicts that sparked endless wars. First, the radical Islamist gangs, which had previously been active in Libya's bloody civil wars, were placed on the battlefield. Then, Gaddafi was overthrown by NATO's intervention. Afterwards, the Syrian Civil War started, which affected almost the entire Middle East in one way or another.



Because of the harsh competition between imperialist forces, such as the US, Russia, Iran, Turkey and the Sunni Gulf regimes, this war turned into a death sentence for millions of Syrians. The multi-identity demographic structure of Syria has been rapidly manipulated. After completing their mission in Libya, radical Islamist jihadist gangs, supported by countries of the region like Turkey and Saudi Arabia, were sent to Syria to fight for a regime change, just as they had done in Libya. In short, the wave of rebellion that began with great hopes for the Arab peoples, turned into a bloody civil war centered around the rivalries of imperialist forces in Syria. It has paved the way for a process that would not be repaired in the region for decades.

The rebellions in Lebanon and Iraq have already been affected by imperialist rivalries. The working classes bear the burden of the political pains created by the US-Iran rivalry, just as they have been for years in Syria. As societies are polarized on the basis of religious and ethnic identities, the cornerstones of bourgeois politics are captured by ultra-rich families and paramilitary armed forces.

Despite all the distinctions and hostilities in their past, the current mass actions that succeeded in bringing together all identities around economic and social demands, have cracked the status quo, which is based on sharing the political sphere. In such a position, the struggle between bourgeois sectors for the reconstruction of the collapsed status quo is inevitable. But one thing is certain: no one cares about the problems and demands of Lebanese and Iraqi laborers!

The Mullah regime in Iran has been skeptical of the protests in the region from the beginning. In an October 31 statement, Iranian religious leader Ali Khamenei said that the actions in Iraq and Lebanon were provoked by US and Western intelligence services, and that those forces wanted to create chaos in the region. The same day, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said: *"The Lebanese people want an efficient and effective government, and an economic reform to end the widespread corruption"*¹ How friendly they are!

The issue, of course, was not limited to the demagogies of both powers. The Mullah regime does not want to lose its decades-long political, economic and military investments in both countries. They passed their experience in repression on to their proxy governments to suppress the laborers.

In Iraq, Iranian-backed forces (especially snipers from the paramilitary Hashd al-Shabi) intervened violently in Baghdad and in the Shiite cities in the South of the country, causing numerous casualties. Last week, Muqtada al-Sadr went to the streets in Najaf to support the protests, hoping to control them, but the people's actions did not wither away. The fact that protesters burn Iranian flags and Khamenei posters shows that their action will not easily settle. In response to these actions, journalist Husein Sheriatmadari, one of Khamenei's advisors, issued a statement calling on Iraqi and Lebanese workers to attack the embassies



of Saudi Arabia and the US.² The masses have already accumulated anger against such political approaches that attempt to make them passive and exclude them.

Iraq has been the scene of many rebellions over the years (the most important ones took place in 2011, 2015 and 2018). These rebellions have generally developed under the control of Shiite political subjects. However, the most important point that attracts attention this time is the overcoming of divisions based on sectarian identities. As Fehim Taştekin quoted from a young Iraqi rebel: *“We are not Sadrists, we are not Sistians. We are not Sunni or Shiite. We are Iraqis. Why are you shooting at us? I can only earn \$ 8 a day to live.”*³ Taştekin says that, despite Shiite Abdulmehdi’s rule in Iraq, the escalation of the protests in the main Shiite cities like Basra, Karbala and Najaf, and, to a lesser degree, in Sunni cities, show that the protest wave has a social reality beyond “the Western conspiracy” discourse.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah and the Shiite Amal Movement continue to defend the current status quo. At the beginning of the protests,

Hezbollah leader Nasrallah, described them as *“a transparent, honest, supra-sectarian popular movement whose roots are not in a party or an embassy”*⁴. However, when a rapid radicalization and anger, also targeting Shiite politicians, became apparent on the streets, Hezbollah turned its back on the masses.

Although Hezbollah forces did not directly target the protests, some attacks by its militants against protesters were shared on social media. For now, the Iranian and Lebanese allies are separating their Shiite grassroots from the protests. Nasrallah has already called on his supporters to not attend the mobilizations to dismantle the movement. The reason for their fear is that their supporters could shift to the left by being affected by the rebellions, and move away from their hegemony.

Yes, the peoples are threatening the imperialist forces and their local collaborators that have made their lives hell. But this anger is not only directed at Iran. If you read the international media, it is possible to read that Iraqi and Lebanese laborers point at Iran as the only reason for their anger. But, against this manipulative

approach, Lebanese working people put forward a good slogan: “*All of them, means all of them*”. Following the resignation of the country’s Sunni and Saudi-backed Prime Minister Saad Hariri on October 29, Lebanese laborers raised slogans voicing their unwillingness to support Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah or Nebil Beriri, who is the leader of the Amal Movement. Activists responded by shouting “*Leave, leave, leave! You are not our father!*”⁵ Similar slogans echo in the streets of Iraq. The hashtag *I want a nation*⁶ became a trending topic on Twitter on those days.

HOW CAN THE REVOLTS IN IRAQ AND LEBANON SUCCEED?

In the Middle East, no political force attached to the imperialist capitalist system



can solve the urgent problems of the working classes. On the other hand, imperialist interventions always shadow the legitimacy of the masses’ just rebellions and strengthen bourgeois leaderships like Hezbollah and Sadr, who are enemies of laborers. Likewise, Iran’s rotten Mullah Regime uses the imperialist repression and international sanctions as an excuse to criminalize and suppress opposition in the country. Moreover, Iran applies this policy not only in internal politics, but also in Iraq and Lebanon, where Iran fights for its hegemony against the US and its allies. They have a reason for this: what scares the Mullah regime the most is that the wave of rebellion could reach Iran in some way.

Western imperialist powers are hypocritical about the wave of rebellion. They attempt to

use the struggle of the Iraqi people as a tool against Iranian hegemony, as if it were not the United States and its Western accomplices who destroyed the people with their 2003 invasion of Iraq. However, it is clear that workers in both countries are on the streets against all the elites of the status quo.

Laborers and the youth, who have been pushed into poverty and misery and have witnessed the corrupt enrichment of a handful of elites for long years, want change now. The fact that they did not abandon the streets and have rejected sectarian divisions is an indication of this desire. However, the mobilization alone cannot guarantee the success of the rebellions, particularly in the Middle East, where imperialist manipulation on mass movements is very common and the organized class struggle is weak.

The bourgeois political order has already gone bankrupt, both in Iraq and Lebanon. These power-sharing regimes cannot give the working classes anything they need. Even if the ruling classes manage to repel the current rebellions, this fact will not change. As long as neoliberal attacks, heavy taxes, unemployment and corruption continue, the people will return to the streets again and again, like they did in 2011, in 2015 and in 2018. However, the street mobilizations are not enough to achieve a real success and to change the future. At the same time, the masses should turn to the left and to socialism. The success of Iraqi and Lebanese working people can only be achieved through an organized class struggle led by a socialist organization. One of the historical tasks of the International Socialist League (ISL) is to build this vanguard force that will bring the peoples of the Middle East together in a “Socialist Middle East Federation”. 🐼

1. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/khamenei-stoking-chaos-iraq-lebanon-protests-191030160139954.html>
2. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/31/world/middleeast/protests-iraq-lebanon-iran.html>
3. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/yazarlar/2019/10/07/irak-yine-bir-komploya-kurban-mi-gidiyor/>
4. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/yazarlar/2019/11/04/lubnani-cekistirmek-hizbullahin-basi-belada-mi/>
5. <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1955411/all-them-means-all-them-lebanon-protest-slogans>
6. <https://time.com/5721115/lebanon-iraq-protests-iran/>



The Fate of the Kurds, THE FUTURE OF THE STRUGGLE

■ V. U. ARSLAN

SEP LEADER GÜNES GÜMÜS, HAD WARNED TURKISH LABORERS AND YOUTH AGAINST THE CHAUVINIST ATMOSPHERE RAISED BY TURKISH BOURGEOISIE, THAT “THE KURDS’ NAKBA WILL NOT BE A FEAST FOR TURKS”.

The operation, which was called “Peace Spring”, aimed to snuff out the Kurdish people’s breath under any circumstances. At the same time, the operation intended to reassure the power of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government by deeply dividing the working class and weakening social opposition. However, social opposition will recover and the AKP’s power

will start to lose its momentum as the country’s internal problems dominate the agenda of the working class. However, the problem of the disorganization and division of the working class is deeply rooted. Certainly, it will never be possible for the working class to develop an advanced class-consciousness and become an active political subject without learning to defend the rights of the Kurds. Therefore, we, the revolutionary Marxists who try to turn the most advanced consciousness of the working class into an organized power, will continue to teach workers the Leninist principle of self-determination. In doing so, we will continue to criticize the Kurdish national movement and maintain our political independence.

EVERYTHING UPSIDE DOWN

It all began with the end of the negotiations, which had lasted for years, between the AKP and the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party). It was not difficult to foresee that the process would evolve back into total war, because neither the AKP and the bourgeois state wanted to grant the Kurds their real rights, nor did the PKK intend to lay down its arms. When the AKP came to power, it appeared to have adopted a moderate line on the Kurdish question, and the Kurdish national movement gave the AKP implicit support at very critical times. For example, during the Gezi Uprising in 2013, the HDP (People's Democratic Party) kept Kurds away from the rebellion. This moderate-reformist image was a necessity for Erdogan's policy of alliances in the power game. Based on mutual distrust, this partnership broke down in 2015. By then, charismatic HDP leader Demirtaş had clearly pushed the HDP to an anti-Erdogan position, becoming an obstacle for Erdogan's attempts to monopolize his own power. On the other hand, the Syrian Civil War had changed the balance of forces. PKK forces in Syria were organizing autonomous rule over their liberated lands in Rojava (Syrian Kurdistan). In addition, PKK militias, composed of young Kurds, took advantage of the negotiation process and had gained considerable control in many cities.

The self-confidence of the PKK leadership had begun to break its ties to reality. Couldn't self-government experiences in Rojava be implemented in Kurdish cities to the north of the border? After the June 2015 elections, in which the HDP achieved a historic success with 13% of the votes, and the AKP lost its majority in parliament, the PKK declared that it had ended the ceasefire, and attempted to establish "de facto autonomy" with its militia forces in many Kurdish cities. This was exactly what the AKP wanted, because it was clear that the ceasefire process had weakened the AKP and Erdogan. Although the AKP tried to provoke the war before the June elections to prevent his electoral defeat, the PKK avoided clashes and prevented overshadowing of the election. But immediately after the elections, the PKK decided to end the ceasefire and sideline Demirtaş, who had achieved a big success. He was later arrested and is still in prison. After the declaration of the end of the ceasefire, self-government was declared in dozens of

Kurdish cities and months-long urban wars broke out. The militias, lacking sufficient ammunition and preparation, did not have much of a chance against the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). The urban wars did not turn into a popular Kurdish rebellion, and everyone carried on with their daily lives, except in the war zones. This was an expression of the people's skepticism of the HDP's urban war strategy. As a result, the militias were isolated in certain parts of the cities, and their defeat was inevitable. The consequences of this defeat were severe for the Kurdish national movement. Thousands of critical cadres in the cities were either killed or arrested. Thousands have fled to Europe. The HDP was intimidated and trustees were appointed by the national government to replace HDP mayors. In the wake of the urban wars, the state of emergency declared after the July 2016 coup attempt also exacerbated the oppression of the HDP. The arrests and dismissals were massive, and the HDP is still practically paralyzed. The Kurdish people have seen worse before, and mass civil protests can return, but the current situation indicates that the war-torn masses are now staying away from active politics.

In addition, the PKK suffered significant defeats in rural areas. Utilizing technological opportunities well, and constantly improving itself, the TAF have significantly weakened the PKK in rural areas. The PKK's capacity to act has fallen to its lowest levels in its history.

Despite these losses, the gains of the Kurdish national movement in Rojava were a great source of motivation. However, with the approval of Russia and other imperialist states, the TAF's intervention in Syrian territory has started. First, the Al-Bab-Azez-Jarablus region was invaded by Operation Euphrates Shield, which started in August 2016. The symbolic Afrin region, where a dense Kurdish population lives, followed in January 2018; and finally, the area east of the Euphrates was attacked in October 2019. This is how the Kurdish national movement lost Rojava after the US abandoned them.

The military defeats of the Kurdish national movement will have long-term consequences. It seems difficult for the PKK to recover in the military field. It is obvious that the Turkish state will not abandon its military advantages and superior position. In general, this is a historical period in which the possibilities of guerrilla struggle have diminished. On the one hand, the weakening of the PKK does not mean that the Kurdish people

will give up their national aspirations. The national dynamic will continue to manifest itself in votes for the HDP. On the other hand, without significant changes in the political transformation of Turkey, the mobilization capacity of the HDP will continue to be limited.

HISTORY OF THE OPPRESSION OF THE KURDS

In the early twentieth century, in the wave of rising nationalist movements and the formation of nation-states, the Kurds did not prosper under the Ottoman Empire. The turning point for them was that, after the First World War, the territory they inhabited was divided in four: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria.

On the other hand, the origin of the Kurdish question dates back to an early age. It is based on efforts to centralize the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. The centralist features of the administrative reforms then implemented, were carried out as part of a Turkish modernization plan. They faced resistance from the Kurdish tribes that had lived with de facto autonomy until then. Those first revolts were led by Kurdish feudal lords. In the last quarter of the century, the leadership of the Kurdish religious authorities (sheikhs) would prevail in the uprisings.

After the overthrow of Panislamist Sultan Abdulhamid II, who was generally good to the Kurdish tribes and cooperated with them to suppress the Armenian minority, the state's official ideology was rebuilt based on Turkism. Hence, the spirit of the time, shaped by the Armenian rebellions, the Balkan Wars and the imperialist war,

pointed to a rise of nationalism. The development of Kurdish nationalism was strengthened as a reaction to Turkish nationalism.

The economic backwardness of the Kurdish regions has weakened the social classes that would be the bearers of Kurdish nationalism, delaying the united national character of the earlier Kurdish rebellions. But in 1908, with the II Constitutional Monarchy, Kurdish intellectuals would become politicized on the basis of a Kurdish national identity. Just before and during the First Imperialist War, those intellectuals began to emphasize the Kurdish identity and make nationalist demands.

During this period, the activities of Kurdish intellectuals in favor of establishing an autonomous or independent Kurdistan intensified. As the borders of the Middle East were drawn, Kurdish nationalism tried to arouse national consciousness among Kurds, and to establish a separate Kurdish political administration in its historical territory, as a late attempt of recovery.

Although the Sevres Agreement that the First Imperialist War's winners imposed on the defeated Ottomans envisaged a large Armenia and a rather small Kurdistan autonomous government, the national liberation movement that started under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal - which the Kurds had joined - actually invalidated this agreement.

As a result of the ensuing battles, the occupation of Anatolia by English-backed Greece was defeated, the French troops in the southern regions were deported to Syria by a local resistance that included the Kurds, and the stability of the Soviet and Iranian borders was preserved. Thus:



- 1) The historical division of the Kurds in two, between the Ottoman Empire and Iran, turned into a division in four regions under Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, and the present boundaries were established. As a result, the Kurdish problem has gained a regional character and the Kurdish people have been subjected to different forms of oppression under different regimes.
- 2) Mustafa Kemal and his cadres used their authority, derived from their leadership of the national liberation, to break with the Ottomans and the caliphate, and establish a bourgeois republic. The Republic has ambitiously implemented a policy of centralization and nationalization inherited from the Ottoman Empire, and used Turkish nationalism intensively as its foundational cement. The Kurds, on the other hand, were ignored and assimilated during the war of national liberation, despite the assurances that the Kemalists had given their tribal leaders.

The most populated and largest Kurdish area is Turkish Kurdistan. Although the Kurds rebelled against the new single ethnicity Turkish state and entered into conflict with the Kemalist regime in over twenty rebellions, these were harshly suppressed. The last of those rebellions, in Dersim (1937), erupted as a provocation rather than a rebellion; the cruelty and brutality of the state had reached extreme dimensions. As a result, the Kurdish national movement remained silent until favorable conditions developed in the 1960s.

The awakening of 1968 shifted the whole country to the left and brought the Kurdish youth into the gravitational field of socialist politics. Young Kurdish revolutionaries set up their own left-wing factions in Kurdistan in the 1970s. The PKK led by Abdullah Öcalan was one of them, though it did not stand out at first. Subsequent developments would bring about the recent Kurdish rebellion under the leadership of the PKK.

IRAQI KURDISTAN

When the Kurdish struggle in Iraq is mentioned, the Barzani family, which has also been partially affected Turkish Kurdistan, comes to mind. The Peshmerga movement, led by the Barzani tribe, has a hundred-year-old experience of national struggle that has left its mark on

Kurdish national history. The Kurdish guerrillas (peshmerga) led by Mustafa Mullah Barzani fought first against the Ottomans, then against the British, and then mainly against the Baghdad-based Iraqi state. In the meantime, with the weakening of the Iranian state after World War II, Barzani's Peshmerga forces moved to Iran and became the military force of the short-lived Republic of Mahabad.

Barzani's forces were forced to cross into the USSR after Stalin left the Kurds in the lurch. As they were not welcome in the USSR, they returned to southern Kurdistan in 1958 to fight for Kurdish political rights. Although autonomy was won from the central government in Baghdad, following some military victories, the corresponding constitutional provisions were never fully implemented and Saddam Hussein achieved a decisive victory over the Peshmerga in 1975, when the Shah regime in Iran ceased its support for the Kurds, who lost their rights again. In 1980, when the 8 year Iran-Iraq War had begun, the Peshmerga forces supported Iran in the war and, in return, Saddam Hussein organized horrific massacres with chemical weapons against Iraqi Kurds.

Hundreds of thousands of Kurdish civilians died in the Halabja and Enfal massacres. In 1991, when the first Gulf War started, the US destroyed Iraq and created the conditions that led to the formation of a de facto Kurdish state in the region, north of the 36th parallel. Massoud Barzani became a close ally of the United States. In 1998, the endless clashes between the Barzani and Talabani tribes were resolved by US mediation, and a kind of Kurdish national unity was achieved. When the US overthrew the Saddam regime in the second Gulf War (2003), and destroyed the Baath state, the Kurdish administration in the north relaxed and became a semi-state, with its own army, bank, oil revenues, and economic growth.

In post-Saddam Iraq, ISIS emerged from the radicalization of the Sunni minority's reaction. When ISIS seized Mosul and threatened Baghdad and Erbil, the US-backed Peshmerga forces liberated a large region from ISIS. The Peshmerga started to control many controversial oil regions, such as Mosul and Sulaymaniyah. However, when Barzani tried to consolidate all these gains with an independence referendum, he found himself completely abandoned. In addition to Baghdad,



Tehran and Ankara also showed sharp hostility.

But what was really devastating for Barzani was that the US and Europe left him at the mercy of his enemies. When the Iraqi army - which had been strengthened in the war against ISIS and had become a destructive force with the contribution of Iranian-backed paramilitaries - marched north, the Peshmerga forces could not resist. All the controversial areas, for example, oil-rich Kirkuk, which had been contested for 80 years, were lost. While the Iraqi Army could have easily seized even Arbil, Baghdad halted the operation once the Kurds returned to the previous borders of the Kurdistan Regional Government. The Kurds were disappointed once again.

IRANIAN KURDISTAN

Iranian Kurdistan also has a history of a century of struggle, with considerable milestones, like the era when tribal leader Simko held the area around Lake Urmia for four years, from 1918 to 1922; or the Republic of Mahabad, which lasted less than a year, in 1946, under the leadership of USSR-backed Gazi Muhammad, also supported by Barzani's Peshmerga forces. When the Shah Pahlavi regime was overthrown in 1979, the Kurds once again attempted to take advantage of the authority vacuum, but when the Tehran administration stabilized its power, the Kurds had no chance of resisting. The pro-Barzani Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (IKDP) and the leftist Komala (Revolutionary Workers Union of Iranian Kurdistan) led the struggle, but retreated once again to a guerrilla struggle in the

mountainous regions. IKDP leader Kasimlo was assassinated in 1989 in Vienna by the intelligence service of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the ongoing low-intensity guerrilla struggle, the PJAK, Iranian arm of the PKK, has come to the fore.

SYRIAN KURDISTAN

A part of the Kurdish minority in Syria consisted of those who fled repression in Turkey. The nationalist regime in Damascus declared that the newly arrived Kurds would not be granted citizenship, in order to hide the fact that they had become a majority in the Jazeera region. Throughout northern Syria, the government rolled up its sleeves to create an Arab belt and tried to disrupt the area's ethnographic structure. On the other hand, the Hafez al-Assad administration decided to support the PKK against Turkey, which is his northern enemy. In fact, during the Cold War, the Assad regime actively supported Palestinian groups and all anti-Israel and anti-US guerrilla organizations. However, because of the disputed region of Hatay and Turkey's support of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was Assad's greatest enemy, the Syrian regime was hostile to Turkey.

In this context, the support given to the PKK was of particular importance. In fact, Abdullah Öcalan led his organization from Damascus for many years. There were two major stipulations the Assad regime imposed on him. First, the PKK was not to use the Syria-Turkey border to stage guerrilla attacks against Turkey. Second, the PKK

was not to organize the Kurds in Syria against the Assad regime. This agreement played an important role in the calm that reigned in Syrian Kurdistan compared to the other Kurdish regions. On the other hand, when the USSR collapsed, the Assad regime lost its main supporter, which weakened it significantly.

Because the PKK was organizing increasingly intense attacks against Turkey from Syria, Turkey gave Damascus an ultimatum after securing approval from the United States: Öcalan would leave Syria or Turkey would declare war on Damascus. Öcalan had to leave Syria and was subsequently captured in Africa by a CIA operation. Bashar al-Assad came to power in Syria after his father died in 2000. He reconciled with Turkey and Damascus began to cooperate with Turkey against the PKK. Sixty-four people lost their lives in a police intervention in the clashes after a football match in Qamishli, in 2004.

When the civil war started in Syria in 2011, the Syrian Kurds found the opportunity to establish their own government. However, when in 2019, the United States abandoned the YPG, which is the PKK-led armed forces of the Syrian Kurds, it was left alone against the TAF and Turkish-backed armed groups. Turkey seized almost half of the belt that makes up Syria's northern territory and has changed its ethnographic structure. In the rest of Rojava, the Assad regime recovered control with Russian aid, which means the end of Rojava. The only concern of the US was to keep Syria's oil regions secure, and it had used the YPG to this end.

HOW CAN THE KURDS BE FREED?

The Kurdish people are still confined to the borders of the First Imperialist War. Whenever nationalist states weaken and lose authority, as they have in Iraq and Syria, the Kurdish national movement acquires gains, but when those central authorities recover their authority, all gains are lost. Despite all the wars, the occupation, the crumbling of the state, and the war against ISIS, Barzani was ultimately defeated in Iraq. Likewise, despite the long civil war that ruined Syria, the intense US support that some thought was unshakable, and the victories against ISIS, Rojava has ended.

The imperialist forces supported the Kurds for as long as they served imperialist interests, just as England and France had, then the USSR, and then the US. In the end, they all mercilessly abandoned

the Kurds. Similarly, rival nationalist states supported the Kurdish national movement at times, like Iran and Syria did, but then they also betrayed them.

The defeats sustained by the Kurdish national movement recently in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, in a row, will have very long-term political effects. Despite the hundred years of struggle, effort and the costs paid, the stability of the status quo that oppresses the Kurds has returned. The Kurds, who are predisposed to radicalism and socialism, combine their national aspirations with their anger against poverty and lack of future, resulting in a tremendous energy. The Kurdish youth and laborers must learn from the experiences of history.

The first aspect of reality to acknowledge, is that the liberation of the Kurds is only possible through the total disintegration of the imperialist capitalist status quo. The liberation of the Kurds is only possible through a united socialist class movement that attacks imperialist capitalism and targets the existing order. The history of the Kurdish national struggle over 100 years has also shown that the oppressed cannot be liberated by imperialist forces.

The energy of laborers and the youth is capable of carrying out an internationalist socialist struggle against imperialist capitalism, and in favor of the poor and oppressed people throughout the Middle East. To achieve equality, sisterhood and freedom, there is no other way than to establish a Socialist Middle East!

In a world of nationalism, nation-states and imperialist superpowers, a democratic or military solution is not possible for the Kurdish question. The only solution is class-based and revolutionary. Even when they think they have the world's superpower behind them, even when bourgeois states like Iraq and Syria seem to fall apart, the gains of the Kurds are suddenly destroyed. The conclusion is that the freedom of the Kurds is only possible with the success of a united socialist popular movement that aims at the imperialists, bourgeois dictators, and states as a whole.

No power could stand against an internationalist revolutionary unity of laborers from different ethnic-religious origins in the Middle East. The oppressed Kurdish people can only be liberated in this way. The resistance of the oppressed is, of course, justified and legitimate, but it is our duty to tell Kurdish people that the only way to salvation is socialism. 🌹

ISL Declaration ON ROJAVA

On October 9, with the US's implicit approval, the Erdogan regime launched a military operation in northern Syria (Rojava), which is called "Peace Spring". Other factors lie behind the scenes of the occupation, which is hidden behind fancy diplomatic phrases about the preservation of Syria's territorial integrity and the cleansing of "terror" focuses in the region: Preventing the national-democratic gains of the Kurdish people as an old state tradition, bringing a breath of fresh air to the neo-Ottomanist adventures established on the axis of the Middle East and Syria, reviving Erdogan's decline in popularity due to the economic crisis, poverty and unemployment and raising the consent of the working class with a chauvinist campaign.

Particularly since the referendum in 2016, Erdogan has intensified his co-operation with the MHP (Fascist Party) and launched an overwhelming campaign against the Kurdish national movement. In this new era, especially with Selahattin Demirtas, the Kurdish political movement, which became increasingly strong in the field of civil politics, faced a severe oppression. Demirtas and many HDP politicians have been imprisoned; elected HDP mayors in Kurdish cities were replaced by trustees. While cities such as Sirnak, Nusaybin and Sur were freed from Kurdish youth militias, they were heavily destroyed. Hundreds of people lost their lives. On the other hand, along with the "Euphrates Shield" and "Olive Branch" operations, the Kurdish self-government in Syria, especially Afrin, was severely hit. Through the establishment of post offices, colleges and district governors in these regions, the government is trying to lay the foundations of a possible annexation and

violates Syria's right to sovereignty. Fanatical Islamist groups in Idlib are continuing their battle under Turkey's auspices. The current operation, "Peace Spring", aims to deal a permanent blow to the gains of the Kurdish people and to radically change the demographic structure of the region through jihadist gangs called "Syrian National Army".



In this process, the Kurdish people were abandoned by imperialism, especially by the US. When the danger of ISIS was eliminated, the PYD-YPG, which was once supported for operations against ISIS, is now abandoned in order to prevent the shift of the Erdogan regime, which is one of NATO's strongest allies in the region, to the axis of Russia. In addition, this move also attempts to prevent the possibility of a de-facto occupation by the TAF, to secure US interests in the region in the long term. The PYD-YPG pays heavily for its unilateral attachment to and trust of the United States. This process has proved that oppressed peoples cannot taste freedom depending on imperialist balances. The history of the Kurdish people is full of countless tragic examples: from the experience of the very short period of the Mahabad Kurdistan Republic in

1946 to the independence referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan that was crushed with Baghdad tanks in 2017.

The current dynamics of the Middle East, which were shaped by imperialist powers such as Britain and France after the First Imperialist War, have produced nothing but blood and tears for more than a century. The biggest victims of this process were the oppressed peoples such as the Palestinian and Kurdish peoples. These peoples have faced the most extreme examples of imperialist-capitalist barbarism. Ethnic and religious identity divisions have paved the way for bloody civil wars and massacres in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon.

The imperialist capitalist system surrenders the oppressed peoples of the region: Palestine is oppressed by the Zionist policies of Israel, Yemen is massacred by the dirty regimes of the Gulf, and Rojava is attacked by the military aggression of the Erdogan regime. For Kurdish workers,

there is no other option but to unite with the workers of the other nations, to raise solidarity and build an internationalist alternative against occupations and imperialist hypocrisy. Freedom, equality and sisterhood will not come until the imperialist status quo, which imprisons the Kurds, is completely demolished. The movement of the laborers in Iraq and Lebanon currently demonstrates that the only possible way out is to overcome ethno-sectarian divisions. If a unified socialist struggle succeeds in becoming an alternative for the youth and laborers of the Middle East, the bourgeois system, not only in the Middle East, but in the whole world, will be shaken. Only a Socialist Middle East Federation, established based on real equality, can bring salvation for the oppressed and working people. The International Socialist League calls on workers, women and the youth of the whole world to surround the Kurdish people with solidarity. 🐞

October of 2019





COURT RULING, CATALAN REVOLT, ELECTIONS, INVESTITURE, POLITICAL CRISIS, EXHAUSTED REGIME ...

The Spanish State, Frying **IN ITS OWN GREASE**

■ RUBÉN TZANOFF, SOCIALISMO Y LIBERTAD LEADER

THE SPANISH STATE WALKS ALONG THE EDGE AND DOES NOT HAVE A GOOD PERSPECTIVE. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO BUILD A NEW ALTERNATIVE OF THE ANTI-CAPITALIST LEFT, TO BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY AND SOCIALIST PARTY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGIC CHANGES.

The struggle of the Catalan people is writing a new chapter in its long history as an oppressed nationality. At present, it has received a new boost by an unfair, vindictive and loathsome sentence against its political prisoners. On Monday, October 14, the Spanish Supreme Court (TS) announced its ruling to the leaders of the *Proces* of Independence. There were no discrepancies between the seven magistrates chaired by Manuel Marchena, who unanimously decided

a punishment of 9 to 13 years in prison for “sedition” for the former vice president of the Generalitat, Oriol Junqueras; former counselors Jordi Turull, Josep Rull, Joaquim Forn, Raül Romeva, and Dolors Bassa; the former president of the Parliament, Carme Forcadell, and the leaders of the Catalan National Assembly (ANC) and Òmnium, Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Cuixart. Junqueras and the other five former counselors that are already incarcerated were also convicted of “embezzlement.”

The prosecution’s case was based on the crime of “rebellion with violence”, and backed by the lies, contradictions and concealment by senior officials and members of the Civil Guard. The accusation was refuted by the defense’s witnesses, whose testimonies were

accompanied by clarifying videos. Finally, the Supreme Court ruled that “tumultuous” mobilizations were promoted to hinder the enforcement of laws and the procedure of justice. In addition, it considered that the defendants used money destined to their departments for the realization of the “illegal” referendum, so the “sedition” could not have occurred without “embezzlement.” The defense will appeal to the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights.

The judicial inquisition has not ended. There are still six independentists in exile, including former Generalitat president Carles Puigdemont, who the Court hopes to be able to judge since their European arrest warrants have been reactivated. And there are hundreds of persecuted, detained and/or prosecuted activists.

The conviction of the twelve political prisoners completed the punishment of the two million Catalans who exercised their right to self-determination. It characterizes a judiciary that is dependent on the political power, whose magistrates are its employees, and are designated instead of being elected by the popular vote. The sentence was passed to exemplify what can happen to those who mobilize to achieve independence. They believed that they would defeat the aspirations of self-determination by repressing, convicting the leaders, and sowing fear. But that is not what happened.

THE REVOLT BROKE OUT

Far from causing fear, the sentence provoked outrage and sparked a popular revolt that initiated a new moment of polarization and unpredictable dynamics, which has brought the demand for a Catalan Republic back in the spotlight. The protagonists of the new revolt are independentists, but other actors as well, who are not independentists but see their democratic rights threatened also protest. At the same time the ruling was made public, secondary school and university students began a strike, and neighborhood manifestations broke out in the city halls. Thousands of people mobilized towards Plaza Catalunya, and from there, they headed towards El Prat airport, where the operation of Terminal T1 collapsed during almost ten hours of resistance to police charges.

On October 15, the Freedom Marches began. Five huge columns departed from Girona, Tarragona, Tàrraga, Berga and Vic; there was a sixth column of the CDRs (Committees for Defense of the Referendum / Republic) that departed from Castelldefels. The roads were flooded with starred flags that converged in Barcelona on the 17th. The general strike was a success, with strength in education, administration, commerce, public transport, and other companies. It was convened by the Intersindical-CSC, the Student Union and other organizations, without

An Oppressed Nationality

In a world dominated by imperialism, national borders are a product of victors’ decisions over the defeated. Oppressors make economic, political, social and cultural impositions a common practice. But they should not be meekly normalized by the oppressed. Catalonia has been an oppressed nationality for centuries. It has an identity based on ancient civil rights, institutions, language and culture of its own, forged over centuries of history. After the long siege and the fall of Barcelona on September 11, 1714, the Catalan Courts were dissolved. The War of Succession and the crowning of Felipe V de Borbón implied losing the principality’s self-government, and its submission to Castilian institutions.

The long historical journey of the Spain-Catalonia relationship has had ups and downs, quarrels and

reconciliations, according to changes in power and power relations at each stage. Beyond the divided opinions about history and the present, a majority of Catalans does not feel Spanish and considers that self-determination is a right, not a crime. That is why Catalans are not content with the autonomy Spain grants them: they wish to go further and decide their destiny. Although the *Procès independentista* is developing in the current Catalonia, the libertarian demand of some sectors exceeds those limits and aims to bring together all the *Països Catalans*: the territories where the Catalan language is spoken, including the Balearic Islands, the Valencian Community, the Aragon Strip, El Carche (Region of Murcia), the city of Alghero (Sardinia) and Roussillon (the French department of Eastern Pyrenees). 🌱



the support of the General Workers Union (UGT) or Workers' Commissions (CCOO). It was a historic day with the unified participation of workers and students. The shock wave generated solidarity actions in Madrid, Bilbao, Zaragoza, Valencia, Mallorca, Alicante, Castellón and other cities, as well as in other countries, such as France, Argentina and Hong Kong, just to mention a few examples.

The days passed and the actions called by the ANC-Òmnium, the CDRs and a new actor, Democratic Tsunami, continued. Democratic Tsunami is a platform with an unknown structure, which uses its own applications with restricted access, social networks and a Telegram channel to guide protests without suffering legal punishment. So far, it has called for surprising actions of enormous magnitude and support: the collapse of the airport, a day of collective street "reflection" on November 9 and the blockade of border roads with France in Catalonia and Euzkadi on November 11, 12 and 13. State agencies have carried out cyber attacks against them without success, and persecute them.

THE YOUTH SAID "ENOUGH!"

A powerful youth has erupted on the scene, overflowing every manifestation with color, wit and combativeness. Some would discredit them by saying that they are "*rich children of Sarrià*", "*radical indepes*", or "*anti-system*". The truth is that it is a broad youth vanguard that got fed up with the injustice and humiliations: they

are grandchildren of anti-fascist grandparents, they are political children of the *Indignados* and the 1-O referendum, and that is why they have social sympathy and active support. A sample of this solidarity could be seen at the rally held on Thursday the 24th at University Square, convened by unions and academic entities under the slogan *Do not touch our youth!*, and in people's active participation in all major events.

The students declared a strike of indefinite duration with pickets at the entrances of the universities and a camp on the Gran Vía, right in the center of Barcelona, holding assemblies, talks and surprise actions. In sum, the bottom of the issue is that capitalism worsens the democratic and social conditions of the majority, and the world's youth are not willing to stand idly by watching their present and future being taken away from them.

The current situation has revived the debate about violence, with different positions taken around it. The repression of the National Police, the Mossos d'Esquadra¹ and the special forces of the Brimo is brutal. Just in the first week after the sentence, they have arrested 21 people, and injured over 600, four of whom lost an eye from rubber bullet impacts. A young man lost a testicle, and a woman is in serious condition due to head trauma. Marginally, but in tune with the state violence, fascist groups physically assault people and provoke protestors, with the Spanish flag in one hand and the Nazi salute in the other.

The violence of the batons is ordered from the offices. Pedro Sánchez (Spanish Socialist Workers



Party, PSOE) continues with the policy of former President Mariano Rajoy (Popular Party, PP): not recognizing self-determination, not opening negotiations, rejecting an agreed referendum, and threatening to reapply the disastrous Article 155 of the Constitution. Meanwhile, the right wing demands that exceptional measures be taken. According to some analysts, there are sectors of the army willing to intervene.

Those who argue that the Catalan people are violent and are terrorists, lie. They find the stimulus of the unionist media that hide, fragment and / or misrepresent reality to the public, especially outside Catalonia. It is no coincidence that *"Spanish press, manipulative"* is chanted at the marches. The truth is that the Catalans respond to repression with mobilization, many with their arms raised chanting *"we are people of peace"*, others sitting on the ground while they are

beaten, and now also building barricades of self-defense against the advance of the state's repressive machinery. It is the regime that applies and generates violence, punishing people who exercise their self-determination with jail, persecuting and prosecuting activists. The oppressor is violent, not the oppressed that defend themselves however they can.

SECOND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Sanchez came to power in 2018 through a censure motion against Rajoy. When Social Democracy failed to get the General State Budget approved, the Legislature expired and Sanchez had to call early elections on April 28, in which he received the most votes. However, his investiture failed. Sanchez accused Podemos because *"they have blocked the investiture of a socialist for the fourth time."* Pablo Iglesias (Podemos) pointed to Sánchez for preferring Ciudadanos (Cs) and *"wanting to be president in exchange for nothing"*. Gabriel Rufián (ERC) questioned them both because *"they have lost the historic opportunity"* to achieve a *"left wing government."* Right wing parties pointed to the PSOE, arguing that they never intended to agree and their strategy was always to return to the polls.

Finally, the second presidential elections in seven months and the fourth in four years - a case with no equal in Europe - were held on November 10. The population's tedium was expressed in a drop in participation from 76 to 70%. The general results gave the PSOE a new victory, but with a

Some Dates of the Procés

In the last decade, the *Procés* has been an unavoidable milestone in addressing current events. On September 6 and 7, 2017, the Catalan Parliament approved laws convening the Referendum and Transience. The attorney general accused Puigdemont's government of "disobedience, prevarication and embezzlement." On the 11th and 12th there was a massive Diada (mobilization), and the Constitutional Court suspended the Transience Law, at the request of then president of Spain, Mariano Rajoy (PP). On September 20, the judiciary ordered to search the Catalan Department of Economy, provoking a spontaneous and massive demonstration in response, for which Jordi Sánchez (ANC) and Jordi Cuixart (Òmnium) were accused of "sedition".

Though the Referendum was declared illegal, more than two million people voted on O-1. The people's participation overcame the requisition of ballots, envelopes, ballot boxes, and the violent police charges. On October 27, the Catalan Parliament declared independence and suspended it in the same act. Rajoy deposed President Puigdemont, dissolved the Catalan Parliament, called for elections for December 21, and applied the disastrous Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution. Puigdemont and other authorities went into exile in different European countries, while other leaders were imprisoned. The farce trial began on February 12 and ended with the sentence of October 14, 2019, after 52 sessions and the statements of 422 witnesses. 🐸



loss of votes, seats, and the absolute majority in the Senate. Its aspiration to govern on its own was unsuccessful. United We Can (UP - Podemos and United Left) continued to lose votes.

The “Trifachito” of PP-Cs-VOX did not become a majority and the relative clout of the three parties was altered. The PP saw a partial improvement. Cs plummeted, losing more than two and a half million votes and 47 seats, an important fact for two reasons: 1) it configured the fall of the party that, until a few months ago, was the most dynamic of the recycled right, 2) the votes that they lost fed the ultra-right VOX party, which jumped from 2.6 to 3.6 million votes (24 to 52 seats), and became the third force in Congress. Its boom has explanations and responsibilities.

In Catalonia, the pro independence forces continued to grow, which expresses the vitality of the process for self-determination and the freedom of political prisoners. It was a very positive fact that the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP) ran for the first time in Spanish elections and obtained two deputies: comrade Mireia Vehí and comrade Albert Botrán. From Socialism and Freedom (SOL), we have been part of this anti-capitalist formation’s campaign to also be “*ungovernable*” in “*the belly of the beast*”, with the banners of self-determination, amnesty, and democratic and social rights.

THE SÁNCHEZ-IGLESIAS MUTATION

Between the election of August 28 and the election of November 10, seven months passed in which the possibility of an investiture consensus was never expressed. However, the day after the

elections, Sánchez and Iglesias left their negotiators aside, met secretly, and within 24 hours changed from irreconcilable politicians to trusted associates, embracing an agreement of 10 general points and administration positions. Why did they change diametrically and so quickly? They did so because Spain is on a winding and unsustainable path for the bourgeoisie and the European Union, who demand an urgent end to the political uncertainty. And, fundamentally, because a weak acting government is navigating through a vigorous storm: the Catalan rebellion that it cannot control, which decides when and how it closes national borders and roads, occupies public spaces and airports. The regime needs to form a government “*no matter what*”, as Sánchez said. Iglesias and his United Left (IU) allies are on board with these needs and now work to convince new political actors to present an Executive as solid as possible. We will see what certain formations, like Anticapitalists, ERC, PNV and others that have been ambiguous and / or changing in terms of the investiture, end up doing.

REFORMISTS IN ACTION

It is not worth going into the PSOE too much. Beyond what it says, its long and proven track record shows that it is not a socialist, working class or leftist party. It *is* necessary to refer to United We Can, because for many people it is something different. However, if the envisioned government ends up materializing, it would be the corollary of the political bankruptcy of UP as an alternative for change on the left. A bourgeois coalition

government would cross all class boundaries and would graduate Iglesias as a “critical” servant of the monarchist-parliamentary regime. The doubts some have had about his so-called “equidistance” between Spain and Catalonia would be revealed for what it always was: a position in favor of maintaining the *status quo*, which brought the Podemos leadership closer to the oppressors and distanced it from the oppressed. Reformism continues to demonstrate its limitations in responding to capitalism’s disasters. When assessing why there are young people and fighters who first follow them, then get disappointed and even migrate to the right, we must point out the course of adaptation and capitulation of those center-left leaders: they are responsible for demoralizing and sowing distrust in layers of honest fighters.

An Executive based on the PSOE-UP duo would be a government of double speak, “progressive” in its discourse and even in adopting some measures, but conservative in maintaining the old and anachronistic political and economic structures, guarantor of the unity of Spain, and obedient to the impositions of the Troika.² They are playing with fire as social tedium increases, the Catalan revolt does not give them respite and, as the uprisings in Ecuador, Chile, Hong Kong and other parts of the world show, the irruptions of the mass movement do not arrive with prior notice. A deep and sustained

crisis is under way, which will not be solved with the election of this or that president because its origin and genesis are in the 78 regime.

INDEPENDENCE YES, BUT NO...

The Catalan people have kicked the playing board again and placed the major formations Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), Partit Demòcrata europeu Català (PDeCAT) and Junts per Catalunya (JxCAT) in the dilemma of rising to the occasion or being overtaken by the mobilization. The continuing attacks of the Spanish central power clearly indicate that half-measures are useless: the regime is either defeated or the oppression intensifies. This reality was demonstrated with the declaration of independence, which was then suspended within a few seconds of being proclaiming, when there was more than sufficient strength and willingness to take the measure to its last consequences, effectively founding the Republic and developing a Constituent Process.

Several examples indicate a growing dissatisfaction with those who, from the government and Parliament, say one thing and do another: they speak of the Republic, but they set a course for limited autonomy; they encourage disobedience, but endorse the repression of the Mossos or justify the arrests; they demand social measures,

VOX and its Normalizers

The world situation is increasingly polarized, marked by huge working class and popular rebellions, with massive marches, strikes, various kinds of actions, and harsh confrontations with repressive forces. In this framework, right wing, ultra-right and / or fascist expressions with different degrees of social acceptance, also appear. This reality, which has been manifesting itself in Europe for a long time, had not achieved institutional insertion in Spain until very recently. But that has changed with the emergence of VOX. There are people who cynically argue that the Catalan struggle is responsible for its growth. The truth is that there is a social sector that agrees with Francoism and the monarchy, that approves of repression, and that is xenophobic and homophobic and, as a consequence, is akin to the VOX message. The organization led by Santiago Abascal is also mounted on people’s unsatisfied needs and false patriotic conscience.

However, the magnitude of its rapid growth has increased thanks to the attitude of those who call themselves “democratic” but normalize the presence of the extreme right. The Supreme Court allowed two of its leaders to act as part of the people’s plaintiff in the show trial against the independence leaders. Although they vie for the same political space, the PP and Ciudadanos catapulted the *fachos* by governing in coalition with them in Madrid and Andalusia. Social democracy and the center-left cannot wash their hands either: they use VOX to polarize the election and campaign as a “containment dam”, instead of focusing on defeating them in the streets and closing them off from all political and social spheres. VOX also receives the support of some mass media outlets that provide them with wide coverage, giving up their anti-fascist dignity in exchange for a wider audience. 🐞

From the Republic to the Dictatorship

On February 16, 1936, the Popular Front (FP) triumphed in the Spanish elections and proclaimed the Second Republic. On July 18, the fascist right carried out a coup d'état and initiated the three-year Civil War that divided Spain into two irreconcilable sides: on the one hand, the fascists with their *falanges*; on the other, the workers with their militias, control patrols and a network of committees that united workers and popular organizations. In Republican Spain, there was a situation of dual power, with unequal development in different regions, in which the masses severely limited the power of traditional authorities, in particular the Catholic Church, seized factories and lands, and began to exercise power through their committees.

The possibility of dealing fascism a fatal blow, fulfilling pending democratic tasks, and advancing to socialism was concrete. But that was not the orientation of the FP, whose decision was to keep the process within the limits of a bourgeois republic. Despite the enormous heroism of the working class and the popular sectors, the blatant betrayal of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) under Moscow directives and the PSOE led to a defeat of the revolutionary process. On April 1, 1939, Franco won the war and there was a huge contradiction: while Nazis and fascists were being defeated and withered away throughout Europe, Franco emerged triumphant and began a bloody military dictatorship that would last four decades. 🦋

but they promote the disastrous Aragonese Law of privatizations. Some ERC leaders are earning the repudiation of the fighting vanguard by not defending the detainees of the revolt and not severely questioning Minister of the Interior Miquel Buch for the Mossos' repression, while there is an extended demand for his resignation. Deputy Gabriel Rufián was kicked out of a rally to the cry of *botifler*, synonymous to "traitor". Deputy José Rodríguez tried to convince the protesters to withdraw from Vía Laietana Avenue and found a firm response: "*Not one step back.*"

AN EXHAUSTED REGIME

After the Second Republic and the Civil War, Francisco Franco established a dictatorship that did not end defeated by the action of the mass movement but as a result of his death in 1975. In fact, he had already designated the king, Juan Carlos I of Bourbon, as his successor. The transfer of command facilitated the crimes of the dictatorship going unpunished, friendly officials remaining entrenched in key state positions and the shaping of institutions by fascist ideology. With the Transition, the pacts signed at the Moncloa Palace in 1977 and the drafting of the Constitution in 1978, the bourgeois parties and their accomplices made some changes, but the armed forces, the judiciary, the two party system and the monarchy supervised decades of "democratic" functioning.

The veneration of Franco that endured over time is another example. On October 24, just

over 44 years after his burial in the Valley of the Fallen, his body was exhumed and transferred to the Mingorrubio-El Pardo cemetery. The sinister tomb in which he was located is the only European monument dedicated to a fascist dictator, and it was built once the Civil War ended. Sanchez presented the exhumation as "fruit of forgiveness", but it was intended to turn the page, seal impunity and, incidentally, attract some votes from "progressive" sectors. Achieving justice and punishing the coup leaders and their accomplices, who were ruthless with Republicans, workers and the people, is a pending task. Crimes against humanity do not prescribe.

In short, the monarchical-parliamentary regime of 78 cannot offer any progressive solutions to the political, social and economic problems of the great majority: that is why it must be defeated. If a people like Catalans want self-determination, the answer is prosecution, repression and jail. If workers want better wages and working conditions, the answer is price increases, job insecurity and unemployment. The Constitutional Court has just issued a ruling





whereby it supports firing workers for missing work, even if it is justified by illness. If the people want better living conditions, the answer is to save the bankers and businessmen by giving them millions of Euros at the cost of slashing the public health and education budgets. If retirees want to live with dignity, the answer is a meager increase that is insufficient even for their prescriptions. If women demand concrete measures against patriarchal sexism, the answer is to grant insignificant funds and institutional formalities. If society demands to end corruption and the “sewers of the state”, the answer is impunity for those responsible. In sum, everything is done to comply with the economic guidelines of the imperialist bloc of the EU and the Ibex 35,³ to support the regime and the capitalist system.

From historical and present reality, we see a great amount of pending tasks that will not be solved with partial modifications as some charlatans already suggest. It is necessary to debate democratically in a free and sovereign Constituent Assembly, without any conditions when deciding on a new economic, political and social order favorable to the great majority. The people must decide what their destiny should be! If the regime and the government have room to maneuver, it is because they have the support of the bosses’ parties, the union leaders, and the EU Troika. The current perspective foreshadows a panorama of crisis and polarization, fed by the Catalan people’s strong demand that has not been defeated, the economic slowdown in the face of a new stage of world capitalist crisis, and the outcome

Transition and Constitution of 78

On April 25, 1974, the Carnation Revolution broke out in Portugal and the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar that had ruled since 1926, fell. On November 20, 1975, 82-year-old Francisco Franco died in Spain. Several years before his death, the dictator had appointed Juan Carlos I de Borbón as successor. On November 22, 1975, he was proclaimed king and head of state. Thus began the historical period known as the Transition. The impact of both events triggered a huge working class ascent and the awakening of the nationalities, with the Basques leading.

This process made the social and political order that Franco had built creak and, had it not been for the betrayal of the leaderships, it could have ended up being superior to the Portuguese revolution. But

the PSOE-UGT and PCE-CC.OO. dismantled the movement, saving the king and the dictatorship from a revolutionary defeat. They negotiated with the weakened Franco regime the first general elections after 44 years, which took place on June 15, 1977, and a new Constitution, promulgated at the end of 1978. Thus, the monarchy was formally reinstated, ensuring the continuity of Juan Carlos I, the main commanders of the army, the police, Franco’s judges, the privileges of the Church, and the banks that supported the regime. Impunity was guaranteed, with Basque and Catalan bourgeois nationalists as part of the “great agreement”, in which they expressly renounced the right to the self-determination of their nationalities in exchange for administering a limited autonomy. ✊



of Brexit and of the November 10 elections. In the face of the great challenges ahead, it is imperative to build a new anti-capitalist, leftwing political alternative, firmly tied to the struggles of the working class, the women who fight for their rights, the retirees, and the peoples across the Spanish State.

ADVANCE OR STAGNATE AND RETREAT

Important battles are being fought on every continent. With each popular triumph, the struggle against the exploiters and oppressors, against the capitalist system and imperialism is strengthened. That is why we call for the broadest unity in action to support the Catalan demand. It is a great time for workers and the people to break onto the scene and impose their own political and social agenda in the whole of the Spanish State, like they did on 15M.⁴ To achieve important changes, it is essential for the unrest to transform into action and shake the passivity of the trade union federations. In addition, these are the best antidotes to defeat the right and the ultra-right wherever they raise their heads.

The democratic rights denied to the Catalans are at stake, but so are the rights of all Spaniards with the application of the Gag Law and the Anti-Terrorist Law. We call all who consider themselves republican, progressive, democratic or leftist, to actively demonstrate for self-determination and amnesty. Not doing so clearly implies, in fact, siding with the king. The triumph of the Republic will depend on the emergence of new democratic and principled leaders who turn their backs on symbolic acts and “master plays.” The key is in the leading role of mobilizations, workers’ and

students’ strikes, disobedience, and popular organization. The Constituent Process must begin from below, with the engine of debate in the CDRs, and massive democratic neighborhood assemblies.

From Socialism and Freedom (SOL - Spanish State), we are part of the Catalan popular struggle. From the International Socialist League, we have doubled down our campaign of solidarity with actions at the diplomatic representations of Spain in different countries, and we will continue doing so. Defeating the regime would be a very progressive step, though insufficient. Revolutionary socialists will continue to push further. We do not encourage replacing Spanish bosses with Catalan bosses: the exploitative bourgeoisie is the same and its only flag is its profit. We mobilize for democratic conquests as an indispensable step in the strategy of breaking with the EU imperialist bloc, of satisfying the social needs of health care, housing and education to qualitatively improve the living conditions of the great majority, not of a handful of rich businessmen who dominate the means of production, and the wealth that is produced socially by the working class. In short, we fight for socialism with workers’ democracy, on the path of a strategy of establishing a government of the workers and the people, and a free Federation of Socialist Republics of the Iberian Peninsula. ✊

1. Catalan Police.

2. European Central Bank, European Commission and International Monetary Fund.

3. Spanish benchmark stock market index.

4. The *Indignados* rebellion of May 15, 2011.

ISL declaration ON THE CATALAN PEOPLE'S REVOLT

- 1- On Monday, October 14, the Supreme Court of Spain announced the decision of the Show Trial of the leaders of Procés, which resulted in sentences of 9 to 13 years in prison for sedition and embezzlement, with disqualification from public office. The condemnation of the twelve political prisoners rounded out the punishment of the two million Catalans who exercised their right to self-determination by voting in the 1-O Referendum in 2017. It is an unjust, vengeful and repudiable ruling, dictated to exemplify what can happen to those who mobilize with the common goal of achieving independence.
- 2- However, far from causing fear, the sentence deepened the people's rupture with Spain, generated more outrage and a massive revolt. As soon as the ruling was made public, students began a strike and there were demonstrations in each City Hall and important square of Catalonia. Thousands of people mobilized towards El Prat Airport, collapsing its operation during hours of resistance against police charges. On Wednesday, the "Freedom Marches" began. Huge columns with stared flags parted from the provinces walking along the roads to Barcelona, where they came together on Friday in a historic day of general strike. Massive demonstrations called by the ANC - Òmnium, Democratic Tsunami, the Intersindical CSC and the CDRs were repeated every day of the week. A new moment of greater polarization and a dynamic that will depend on the class struggle at the local and international levels has begun.
- 3- A powerful youth has risen in these events. They are tired of the attacks against freedoms, of feminist posing as electoral formality to fit well with society, of the xenophobia against immigrants, of the austerity, be it from the Spanish State or the Catalan bourgeoisie. In short, it is a youth that is tired of the conditions imposed by capitalism. They are the children and grandchildren of those who heroically confronted Franco, who never accepted the Francoist transition and its "exemplary democracy." They want to turn everything around and they act according to that desire.
- 4- The youth have placed themselves on the front line, erecting barricades to defend themselves against the repression of the National Police and the Mossos d'Esquadra that have so far caused: 21 detainees, more than 600 wounded, four of whom lost an eye from rubber bullets, one lost a testicle and another person is in serious condition. In addition, the youth is at the forefront of the direct confrontation with the groups that provoke people with the Spanish flag in one hand and the Nazi salute in the other.
- 5- There are those who argue that the Catalans are violent and point them out as terrorists. These are outrageous lies. The truth is that they defend themselves from repression, as did entire generations of Spaniards against Franco. Violent is the state that beats protesters who have their arms raised, are sitting on the floor or voting. Violent is the state that punishes and jails those who determined themselves and

organized a democratic referendum, the state that persecutes and prosecutes activists. Violent is the oppressor, not the oppressed who defend themselves as they can. It is a shame that there are people that say they are republican, progressive, democratic and leftist and do not clearly support the demands of the Catalan people, objectively putting themselves on the side of the King, his repressive forces and his right-wing parties. Podemos and the Comunes want to conciliate with both sides, in an equidistante position that places them closer to the oppressors than the oppressed.

6 - The government of Pedro Sánchez (PSOE), the PP, Ciudadanos and the far-right of VOX not only endorse the ruling, but also press for the adoption of exceptional measures. Far from offering a political solution to a political problem, they intend to continue prosecuting the protest. They are the exponents of a monarchical-parliamentary regime, embodied in the Constitution of 1978, which is totally exhausted, can not provide any progressive response to the nationalities of the Iberian peninsula, nor to workers, pensioners or women. It only offers servility to the European Union, an enemy of self-determination, guarantor of the bail outs of big business and banks and an administrator of the cutting of democratic and social rights.

7- The people have kicked the board again and placed the Catalan majority parties in the dilemma of raising themselves to the circumstances or being overwhelmed. The continuity of the attacks of the central power clarifies that moderate measures are useless: the regime is either defeated or the oppression intensifies. This was demonstrated with the symbolic declaration of independence, despite the popular will to make the Republic effective with the Constitutional Process and taking things to their final consequences. That is why there is growing discontent with those who, from the Government and the Parliament, say one thing and do another: they speak of the Republic, but they set the course for autonomy. They encourage disobedience, but endorse the repression of the Mossos or justify the arrests. They demand social measures, but maintain cuts in health, state salaries and the disastrous Aragonese Law of privatizations.

It is necessary to turn our backs on their “master plays” and make way for the direct role of mobilization, strikes and mass organization with new leaders at the front. It is on the streets that the people defend themselves: release of detainees, self-determination and disobedience mark the way forward, as well as confronting the Catalan bourgeoisie.

8- In Chile, Lebanon, Hong Kong, Ecuador, Algeria, France, Syria, in short, in every continent, great battles are being fought. With each triumph, the fight against the exploiters and oppressors, the capitalist system and imperialism is strengthened. Therefore, we call for the broadest unity of action to support the struggle of the Catalan people and since the sentence passed, the International Socialist League has redoubled its solidarity campaign with actions at the Spa-



nish embassies and consulates in different countries. Thus we will continue, against repression, for the freedom of political prisoners and exiles, of those detained in the protests, for the fall of the regime shaped by Francoism. This would be an immensely progressive, though insufficient, step. Revolutionaries socialists will continue to push forward, we do not advocate a substitution of the Spanish bosses for the Catalan bosses, the exploitative bourgeoisie is the same, it has no flags. We mobilize for democratic conquests as an indispensable step in the strategy of breaking with the imperialist bloc of the EU, of establishing a government of the workers and the people and a free Federation of Socialist Republics of the Iberian Peninsula. ✊

October 20, 2019.



YOUTH MOBILIZE AGAINST THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The Other Green Wave, A POWERFUL ANTI-CAPITALIST ALLY

■ MARIANO ROSA, COORDINATOR OF THE ECOSOCIALIST NETWORK

FORTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE 1ST WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE (GENEVA, 1979). THERE, SCIENTISTS FROM 50 COUNTRIES POINTED OUT THAT ALARMING TRENDS IN RELATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE MADE IT NECESSARY TO ACT URGENTLY.

Since then, the 1992 Rio Summit, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2015 Paris Agreement have passed, as well as categorical warnings in dozens of other world meetings. These meetings are not the

novelty, then, but 2019 will go down in history as the year of a qualitative leap in global mobilizations in defense of the planet.

The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN) of August of this year, titled “Climate change and the Earth” and prepared for the ill-fated COP25 in Chile, highlights the following data:

- The consequences of a 1.5°C warming would be very difficult to mitigate in social terms: intensified climate-driven migrations of

millions of people, more droughts, unbearable heat, and floods due to the alteration in rain patterns.

- The objective of the Paris Summit to reduce warming to less than that benchmark over the next 10 years already seems difficult to achieve, almost utopian, due to the lack of measures of urgent mitigation and radical change.

Trump first rejected those very minor commitments, then finally withdrew the world's leading polluter from the Paris Agreement: the US. Bolsonaro and the Chinese government also sabotage the agreement. The experts' report describes the threatening retreat of the gigantic Thwaites and Tottenen glaciers in Antarctica: they alone could raise the sea level about four meters. The report uses a slogan: "*Every ton of CO2 counts.*" And indeed it does.

Just to mention the impact of imperialism, let us take note that the US arms industry emits around 80 million tons of CO2 into the atmosphere every year. We must add 70 million tons emitted by the US Department of Defense, not counting the emissions of its hundreds of bases abroad. In short: the polluters that are going to gather at the COP25 ("relocated" in Madrid by the Chilean revolution) will again act against the urgency to take substantial measures to abandon the hydrocarbon-based energy matrix. They will surely approve a declaration that will continue to retreat from minor previous commitments. The way out of the socio-environmental crisis is political and anti-capitalist. That is reality's verdict. And times are pressing, really.

A TURNING POINT

The week of September 20-27, the largest internationalist week of action recorded in history in defense of the planet and against the socio-environmental disaster caused by capitalism, took place. There were protest actions in 3,000 cities of 162 countries on all continents. Mass mobilizations were carried out in capitalist epicenters, such as the US, Britain, Germany, and other countries, with surprising mass participation, for example, in several of Australia's main cities. There were marches and rallies in dozens of cities in Spain, France, and important mobilizations in Pakistan, India and the most remote places of the world: from Indonesia, Thailand or Tuvalu, to

Nairobi or the Solomon Islands and Antarctica. Taken as a global action, it has a scale, massiveness, and planetary geographical extension superior to any process of struggle experienced in previous decades.

It is a *new planetary green wave*, even more geographically homogeneous and territorial in scope than the feminist movement. It represents the emergence of a new social movement whose central role lies in youth, but at the same time there are countries in Europe, especially Spain, where some unions called to strike and mobilize. This process is here to stay, and mobilizes with such an action that forces the entire political superstructure to take a position on an issue that basically has no solution in the framework of capitalism. The outcome of this tension between the size of the threat to the planet and the strength of this rising movement will determine how far humanity, in this historical stage, manages to overcome this political challenge.



THERE ARE TWO THREATS

The *greenhouse effect* consists of a mechanism that regulates the Earth's climate. It operates by allowing radiation to pass from the sun to the earth and by retaining a part of the heat on the surface, allowing the rest to dissipate. This mechanism works on the basis of a layer of gas (ozone) that retains some of the heat, though not all of it. The over-accumulation of CO2 prevents that layer from dissipating some of the heat and retains more than necessary, increasing the greenhouse effect on the planet; that is, by heating the temperature above its average stability.

This cycle unleashes a spiral that unfolds dangerously: the higher heat affects forests and jungles, those forests and jungles release more

retained CO₂ and reinforces the cycle; ice retains CO₂, its melting releases more CO₂ and, therefore, the dynamic accelerates and becomes unstoppable, if radical measures are not taken.

The planet functions with a certain level of climatic stability. For ten thousand years, it stabilized at an average temperature of 14.5°C. This allowed adaptation and civilized development of the forces of production. In the last 200 years, the temperature rose more than in the previous ten thousand years. This period coincides with the development of capitalism in its decadent phase of overproduction and hyper-consumption. That is to say, the phenomenon that alters all conditions of life on the planet is directly associated, not with “humanity” in general, but with the mode of production based on overproduction and hyper-consumption for profit called capitalism. At the same time, in the



regions of the world that are subject to the presence of imperialist corporations, the form of predatory accumulation of capital known as extractivism is stacked on top of climate change as a form of pressure and concrete challenge.

The need to reduce production costs and ensure reserve value designed a pattern of capitalist accumulation with contaminating consequences: agribusiness with large-scale transgenic seeds and agro-toxics; polluting mega-mining; logging for the pulp industry, like in Chile, which endangers forests and water reserves, and violates native peoples' territories; fracking everywhere, and capitalist urbanization in cities, also anarchic with the antisocial rationality of capital. Of course, everything is managed by governments of traditional parties, labor bureaucracies and media corporations that act to justify this orientation as an “inexorable destiny”.

THE IDEOLOGICAL BATTLE

When a mass movement erupts, the power of corporations, their parties, regimes, and states does not only operate with the mechanisms of social repression. It also activates factories of false ideologies to confuse, divide, spread skepticism. The following are some of the conceptions manufactured for that purpose:

- “Denialism.” This current is represented by Trump, Bolsonaro, and the most reactionary right wing governments. They represent the most concentrated oil corporations, banks and transnational extractivist corporations. Its thesis is that “climate change is a natural phenomenon and those who object to the oil industry are opposed to development and economic growth.” Though they do not have direct influence on the youth that is mobilized, rather the opposite, their line is prevalent in the union bureaucracies of the labor movement.
- “Green capitalism.” This policy is raised by Merkel, the green parties, the Second International, the US Democrats, and characters like Macron. Specifically, they hold that a process of gradual state reforms, agreed on with capitalist companies, will convert the energy matrix to clean and renewable energy through economic incentives and tax rewards for those who pollute the least. In short, green capitalism intends to turn “ecology” into a business niche subject to the capitalist laws of the market.
- “Ecological neo-Keynesianism”. This vision, raised by Bernie Sanders, Ocasio-Cortez and other figures of the “Democratic left” and the US DSA, poses a process of energy conversion of capitalist corporations with state subsidies. That is, a pact with multinational corporations for a conversion over 10 years, obviously without questioning the private ownership of the main levers of energy production and distribution.
- Anti-party “autonomism”. This current, with significant ideological influence, states that, given the difficulty of fighting against capitalism, its centralized states and the prospect of building a different relationship with nature from power, the way out is to build “non-capitalist islands” of “autonomous self-management”. It is a postmodern theory of coexistence with predatory and polluting capitalism.

- The current of “individual guilt.” The propaganda of polluting corporations and governments fosters a false ideology that focuses the responsibility for the socio-environmental degradation on people and their individual “consumption and life habits.” Thus, the responsibility for the lack of water would be solved “with shorter showers” or by “closing the tap” (not by stopping the absurd and gigantic amount of water used by mega-miners and loggers). Global warming is blamed on the increase of private cars as an “individual responsibility” (not on the lobbies of automakers and oil companies). Replacing everything with bicycles and other variants is the proposed solution. At this point, the currents of “degrowth” have gained influence, proposing “personal austerity” as a strategy. In all cases, they conceal the systemic responsibilities of capitalism.
- Extractivist progressivism. This ideology is the political justification of the so-called “progressive” projects of Latin America, which sustained or are still sustaining the capitalist production matrix based on the appropriation and dispossession of nature with “flagship” modalities such as agribusiness or mega-mining. The Evo Morales-García Linera project in Bolivia, Chavism in Venezuela, Kirchnerism in Argentina and the PT in Brazil, all defend this idea. They insist that maintaining those methods is a necessary stage for the productive development of “backward” countries that need to appropriate part of the extractive income to finance social programs and, in an indeterminate future, leave the current model behind. The orientation implies coexistence with corporations that loot and pollute. Governments and projects of this political spectrum have reinforced that matrix in the last 15 years.
- Left “developmentalism”. We also have debates with Marxist currents that simply advocate *workers’ control* of production without questioning the advance of capitalism’s *destructive forces* at this stage. There are branches of capitalist production that have no positive social sense (mega-mining, fracking, agribusiness). Therefore, independently of what social class controls them, they are polluting and harmful *per se*, without any concrete social benefit. Hence, it is key to break with the “developmentalist” taboo and to consider eliminating them, separating ourselves from the disastrous experience of Stalinist

bureaucratic developmentalism in the former USSR. Without direct workers’ democracy in productive planning, a USSR usurped by the ruling clique imposed a logic of production and consumption that was dissociated from real social needs and had tremendous polluting consequences.

Overall, all these currents have one point in common: none of them directly questions the capitalist system as a crucial problem for humanity, since it places the relationship with nature in crisis, as a profit-oriented system of production and consumption that is also expressed in a concentrated state, imperialist and military political power. Additionally, this system builds ideology and ways of thinking for every issue, multiplying them through political, union and media institutions and apparatus.



A ROADMAP FOR THE TRANSITION

The global social movement in defense of the planet has enormous potential for change. Our proposal is to promote the widest action of struggle in this perspective, and, at the same time, to develop a tendency within this movement organized by an anti-capitalist, eco-socialist and profoundly internationalist strategy. The ISL, through its national organizations and experiences, like the Ecosocialist Network, has the political objective of organizing the best young activists in such a tendency, also in order to increasingly influence the decisive subject for a post-capitalist transition to a different mode of producing and consuming: the working class and its traditional organizations. Without the working

class fighting for power in alliance with other popular sectors that are attacked by polluting capitalism, social, economic and political reorganization on new, socialist but nature-friendly bases, is not possible. For these reasons, we raise a series of programmatic coordinates as our GPS to guide our intervention in this movement:

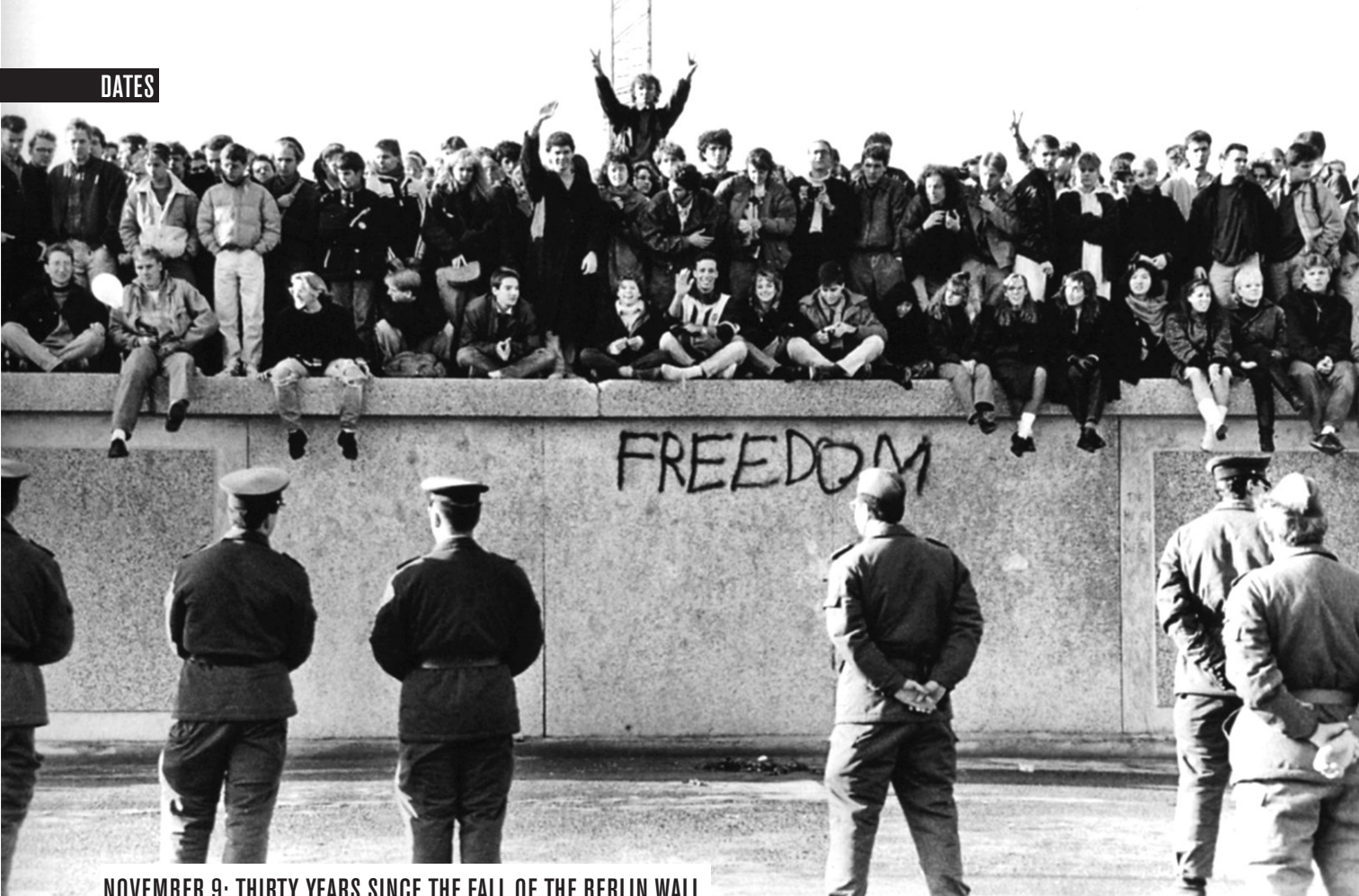
- For the declaration of an immediate socio-environmental emergency in our countries, addressed to the capitalist governments.
- Transition to clean and renewable energy, based



on the expropriation of hydrocarbon industries under workers' control and a new energy matrix.

- The previous point includes the labor-professional conversion of all workers in the affected industries with a guarantee of salary and labor rights continuity.
- Prohibit fracking, agribusiness, logging, mega-mining and speculative urbanization. Productive reconversion based on real social needs, democratically planned with the intervention of the working class.
- A new food model, based on agro-ecological parameters, without transgenics or agrottoxins, to guarantee sufficient, healthy, and accessible food as a social right.
- Extension of rights in public services, starting with state transport under the social control of workers and passengers. Nationalization of all privatized companies, and expansion of their infrastructure.

- More health and public education, based on a strengthening of the state budget and the non-payment of the external debt to the IMF and international financial organizations.
- Distribution of working hours among all available labor. Massive incorporation of technology, not to replace people with machines, but to alleviate the collective workload.
- Elimination of the packaging industry and reduction of waste based on separation at source, recycling and state socio-environmental education at all school levels.
- Prohibition of the capitalist advertising industry that encourages artificial consumption and lies to the population, replacing it with the social right to public information. General democratization of the mass media.
- Activate binding popular consultation mechanisms so that it is the people who decide on any controversy about developing or not developing certain industries that can contaminate. Thoroughly incorporate the precautionary principle of environmental law, which says that *"any productive modality that may impact socio-environmentally must be suspended and subject to research and social debate."*
- Budget for environmental remediation and preservation of species, native forests and other common resources and human heritage, based on the expropriation of polluting companies.
- Opening of all borders to climate migration flows.
- Right to self-determination, demilitarization, and recognition of the territorial rights of native peoples.
- For a model of production that opposes capitalist anarchy, whose sole purpose is to accumulate private profits; in favor of democratic planning with the intervention of the working class for the generation of goods and services that respond to the real needs of the majority, and a distribution that guarantees access to all that the working majority requires, incorporating socio-environmental sustainability as a parameter. 🌱



NOVEMBER 9: THIRTY YEARS SINCE THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

THE DECLINE of “Triumphant Capitalism”

■ LUIS MEINERS

THIRTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE FALL OF THE WALL THAT DIVIDED BERLIN. THIS EVENT SHOOK THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE POSTWAR WORLD ORDER AND PRODUCED PROFOUND CHANGES, WHOSE CONSEQUENCES CONTINUE SHAPING THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD.

The interpretation of these facts is a matter of strong controversies in the revolutionary left and beyond, and is crucial for current tactical and strategic debates.

The fashionable cry of the “end of history” turned out to be more an expression of desire for bourgeois triumphalism than an accurate analysis of political dynamics. We have lived three decades



marked by instability, particularly accentuated since the capitalist crisis that began in 2008.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Eastern European Stalinist bloc marked the end of the post-war world order, characterized by pacts between the victors, resulting in a “bipolar” order. A new stage of the world class struggle initiated. That is, there was an important change in the

correlation of forces between classes that created new political and social situations qualitatively different from those of the previous period.

A key element to understand this change is the fact that the fall of so-called “really existing socialism” was not the product of a triumphant counterrevolution, but of a series of revolutions that ended the Stalinism domination of a third of the planet. These revolutions resulted in the decline of the counterrevolutionary apparatus that had held back, frozen and diverted revolutionary processes during much of the twentieth century.

We must point out that, in fact, Stalinism had long since destroyed the conquests achieved by the revolution and imposed a dictatorial regime that added constant repression and the lack of minimum democratic freedoms to the economic hardships of soviet workers. The bureaucratic caste that ruled these states, sustained their material privileges on the basis of the appropriation of political power through single-party regimes without freedom of expression, discussion, or organization; and negotiating a peaceful coexistence with imperialism that, in fact, meant boycotting the struggles of the working class and the oppressed peoples of the world.

CONTRADICTIONS

However, the stage initiated in 1989 is marked by contradictions that need to be noted. The absence of a revolutionary leadership with mass influence and international support to intercede in events made it possible to impose the path of capitalist restoration in the eastern states, a path that the Stalinist bureaucracy had already begun. Imperialism and the Vatican played strong roles in this regard.

This complexity explains the contradictory nature of the new stage. The positive destruction of the Stalinist counterrevolutionary apparatus was nuanced because capitalism was restored. This fact also produced great confusion in the consciousness of millions and was used by the bourgeoisie and imperialism to deploy an immense ideological offensive about the *failure of socialism* and the unfeasibility of any alternative to capitalism.

The restoration of capitalism in the Eastern bloc and China, in this case under the leadership of the Chinese CP's own bureaucracy, and its full incorporation into the world market, allowed capitalism to counter the tendency of the rate

of profit to fall and to postpone the prospects of crisis in the world economy for a brief period.

Simultaneously, all the old social-democratic reformists accelerated their conversion to the policies of economic counterrevolution, becoming social-liberals. New reformist currents emerged, sustaining the need for capitalism “with a human face”. *Horizontal* and *autonomist* currents that rejected the struggle for power and the global transformation of society in pursuit of micro-politics that denied the strategic importance of the working class and set aside (or completely abandoned) the struggle for socialism were temporarily strengthened.

The crisis of the different international Trotskyist currents completed this picture. Without going into a specific analysis, we can point out that it combines elements of dogmatism, skepticism and bureaucracy. A dogmatic response to the development of new and unexpected events led to a skeptical analysis of the worldwide situation of the class struggle. In this perspective, the socialist revolution was consigned to an indefinite future or directly abandoned in the face of the capitalist offensive. Thus, opportunistic currents ended up abandoning the strategy of building Leninist parties and, driven by impressionism, capitulated to each new political phenomenon. Sectarian currents hid their inability to act under new circumstances, and oriented themselves towards “keeping the flame alive.” In both cases, the responses to the political debates that arose were bureaucratic and eventually weakened those organizations.

FROM RESTORATION TO CRISIS

Events did not unfold like imperialism expected, either. The capitalist restoration in the third of the planet where the bourgeoisie had been expropriated and the economic counterrevolution unloaded by the neoliberal offensive on the backs of workers and peoples all over the world, failed to pave the way to a new period of capitalist prosperity and sustained development of the productive forces.

The “unipolar” world that looked so menacing, has turned out to be much more unstable for capitalists, and US imperialism's capacity to maintain control has been severely beaten. Its military offensives in the Middle East, like the



Iraq war, ended up bogged down. Far from ensuring their control over the region, it led to prolonged wars and the weakening of local political regimes. The revolutions that shake Iraq and Lebanon today are the most recent expressions of this instability.

The hegemony of US imperialism is increasingly questioned. The trade war with China is a clear expression that the US bourgeoisie is aware of this situation and tries different policies to sustain its dominance. On the other hand, the crisis of the European Union reflects the decline of the once powerful bourgeoisie of the old continent.

The 2008 crisis resulted in a period of stagnation in capitalist economies that now threatens to fall into a new recession. This has ended the illusions of those who predicted the “definitive triumph of capitalism” and the “end of history”, leading to growing social and political polarization. Just as new political phenomena arise on the right, the crisis also fuels a new cycle of rebellions and revolutions that question capitalism and its political regimes in the streets, from Hong Kong to Chile, and illuminate new possibilities for the working class and the revolutionary left.

THE VALIDITY OF SOCIALISM

The resistance of the working class and other exploited and oppressed sectors to neoliberal plans, the crises of the political regimes, parties, and traditional leaderships that drove such

plans, and the revolutions that continue to break out in this new century, are a demonstration that the fall of the Berlin Wall did not imply a definitive victory of capitalism or block any socialist perspective. On the contrary, we are in a new situation of insurrections, rebellions and revolutions that confirm an opposite trend, from the irruption of the yellow vests in France in 2018 to the revolution that shakes the Pinochet regime and capitalism in Chile.

In a world where the fortune of the 26 richest people equals what the poorest half of humanity possesses, where capitalism’s voracity destroys the natural basis of life on the entire planet, it is clear that this system does not provide an alternative for the future of social majorities.

Far from disappearing, socialism returns with strength against the capitalist crisis. In the very heart of the capitalist system, the US, more and more young people shun the capitalist system and consider themselves socialists. More than ever, the need to fight for a different model of society is imposed: socialism with democracy. A model that breaks with the capitalist system and also rejects the Stalinist bureaucracy, a model in which the working class and the peoples of the world can regain democratic control over the economy, over their lives, over their future, ending all forms of exploitation and oppression. In order to fight for that society, we need, more than ever, to build revolutionary organizations in each of the countries where the International Socialist League has a presence. 🐞



70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION

China: a Show of Force to HIDE THE CRISIS

■ GUSTAVO GIMÉNEZ

ON OCTOBER 1, THE GOVERNMENT COMMEMORATED THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION WITH WHAT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED THE “GREATEST MILITARY PARADE IN ALL HISTORY.” HOWEVER, TELEVISION SHOWED THAT, IN NEIGHBORING HONG KONG, THOUSANDS OF PROTESTERS CLASHED VIOLENTLY WITH THE POLICE DEMANDING GREATER DEMOCRACY AND AUTONOMY.

After the imposing parade, which included missiles that could reach American territory in a few minutes, there were other impressive celebrations in which some 100,000 civilians of different professions participated. The images showed the president of the Asian giant and

general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) standing aboard a nationally manufactured Hongqi limousine, saluting the troops like a 21st-century Napoleon Bonaparte.

The military parade and massive celebration, destined to show the achievements of the “Chinese model” in a country that is home to 1,400 million people and is the second economy of the planet, could not hide the rebellion that challenges the ruling Chinese bureaucracy a few hundred kilometers to the south. In the former British colony of Hong Kong - now a special autonomous area under Chinese sovereignty - the people have rebelled against that same bureaucracy that parades with an air of omnipotence and governs China with the

methods of a strong dictatorship but cannot contain a territory of just seven million of inhabitants.

REVOLUTION AND COUNTERREVOLUTION IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

Seventy years ago, at the beginning of October 1949, having defeated the troops of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang nationalist party after long years of civil war, Mao Tse-tung's CCP entered Beijing victorious. There, in Tiananmen Square, Mao declared the "People's Republic." Thus, the third Chinese revolution triumphed. The first, led by Sun Yat-sen, had destroyed the emperor's monarchical regime and established a bourgeois-democratic republic in 1911. The second, in 1927, led by the CCP, was a great workers and peasant revolution brutally defeated after Moscow ordered the Communists to hand over their weapons to the national bourgeoisie led by Chiang, whom Stalin had named honorary member of the Third International years earlier.

Mao, a survivor of that bloody defeat, was responsible for concentrating the forces of the CCP in the mountainous region of Hunan, protected from the Kuomintang's repression, adopting a defensive tactic that is characteristic of the Chinese peasantry's struggles: the rural guerrilla war. Thus, the crushing of the revolution in the most important cities was followed by a long peasant resistance (the peasantry represented 80% of the country's population). The civil war lasted from 1927 to 1937 when Japan, which already occupied Manchuria, invaded all of China and nationalists and communists united to face it.

At the end of the war in 1945 and after Japan's defeat, the Chinese economy was destroyed, its industries were dismantled and a serious crisis hit its peasant economy. The civil war between the poor peasantry led by the CCP and the Chinese bourgeoisie with Chiang in government resumed. The CCP, which had been strengthened among the peasant masses during the years of resistance against the Japanese invasion, did not intend to take power to carry out a socialist revolution. On the contrary, it was trying to reach an agreement with Chiang to first establish a democratic republic, a "revolution by stages" recipe from the Stalinist cookbook. But Chiang and his generals did not want that agreement: they wanted to destroy the CCP's power among the peasant

masses, as the only way to regain full control of the country and reorganize capitalist China.

According to the Yalta and Potsdam agreements signed by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, China had to remain in the capitalist orbit: Chiang's government was recognized and consequently Stalin ordered the Chinese CCP to subordinate itself to the Kuomintang's power.

The Chinese situation was dire after the war. Industry was dismantled, millions of peasants had been stripped of their land and a layer of speculators and collaborators from the Kuomintang had seized millions of hectares. Hunger, hyperinflation and widespread corruption of the ruling strata completed a picture of a serious crisis.



The situation was so fragile that the US government ordered its fleet, which had fought against the Japanese in the Pacific, to disembark in China. An uprising of US workers and young sailors and soldiers prevented the incursion. The triumph of the Chinese revolution owes much to this uprising, just as the Vietnamese revolution in 1975 owes much to the multitudes of young people in the US that rebelled and refused to be recruited to the Vietnam War.

Gradually, the Chiang regime that persecuted and forced Mao's army to undertake the "Long March," began losing ground against the peasant insurgency. The course of the confrontation led Mao to decree an agrarian reform in October 1947, in which tens of millions of peasants expropriated landowners. That measure marked the final course of the civil war: Mao's troops

and peasant insurrection were unstoppable. Finally, Chiang's generals were defeated and the historic October 1 revolution triumphed in mainland China. The Kuomintang bourgeoisie fled desperately to the island of Formosa, later renamed Taiwan, where they proclaimed their government, which the UN recognized as the legitimate representative of the Chinese nation until 1971.

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

The revolution unified China and won its independence from imperialism. It implemented a first agrarian reform that became massive after the Korean War. It ended the hunger of millions, alphabetized, recomposed industry and the labor movement. Imperialism counterattacked with the Korean War of 1950-53 and a million Chinese



fought alongside Koreans against imperialism, dealing the US a hard defeat.

While the revolution meant a huge leap forward for hundreds of millions of Chinese people, the bureaucratic economic decisions (failure of the "one hundred flowers campaign" first and the "great leap forward" later), the increasingly reluctant USSR aid, three years of calamities (drought, floods, etc.) and the defeat of the Indonesian revolution¹ generated friction and disputes within the bureaucratic clique.

Mao launched the "Cultural Revolution" in 1966 to tip the balance of these internal disputes in his favor. Thus he displaced from the party apparatus the leaders and cadres who, like Deng Xiao-ping, questioned his policies. It was an attempt to curb the contradictions

raised by the imperialist advance in Vietnam after the Indonesian defeat and the internal problems caused by the strengthening of the working class and the crisis of the poor peasantry. The movement aroused great enthusiasm among Chinese students and intellectuals in the beginning, and then penetrated the labor movement, which developed a wave of strikes and, together with the students, founded a commune in the city of Shanghai in January 1967. It also entered deeply among the Red Guards.

Once he had achieved his objective, Mao slowed the process down, repressed its left wing, took over the organizations that the masses had created and called for an end to criticisms of the apparatus. The "rehabilitation" of many of the displaced hierarchs took place and a right turn began. Strengthened by border clashes with the USSR in March 1969, this turn led to Mao receiving President Nixon in Beijing in 1971, in the midst of a US military offensive in Vietnam. Army Chief Lin Biao, who was considered Mao's successor, was displaced for expressing differences with this policy. In 1973, Deng Xiao-ping was rehabilitated. In 1975, the Chinese Constitution was reformed and peasants' right to private property over small plots of land was recognized. The advance of the rightist turn would be accelerated qualitatively by Deng after Mao's death in 1976.

MAOISM

The Maoist leadership stems from a process that combines an agrarian revolution and its organizations power - the associations of poor peasants - in the north of the country, with an uprising against feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism and US imperialism in the south. Mao tried to contain the revolution in a democratic phase, but the logic of the socialist revolution in the countryside was imposed and a government emerged that expropriated the bourgeoisie, in contradiction with Mao's initial strategy. Unlike the Soviet democratic regime of the Russian Revolution's early years, the Chinese government would be based on a Bonapartist² regime and the apparatus of the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Army from the outset.

The weakness of the Chinese working class, which had been devastated during the war,

the enormous volume of the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois influences in it, the absence of a revolutionary Marxist party and the pressure of Stalinism, were substantial factors in the formation of that leadership. Its origin is different than that of the Stalinist leadership that ruled the USSR: while the Russian leadership was the product of a counterrevolution and reflected a privileged caste, the Chinese leadership emerged from a great revolution, trying to play a mediatory role between the different classes in conflict. By its origin, the Chinese bureaucracy is similar to the Cuban or the Yugoslavian ones, which were born from revolutions they led. Its Bonapartism closely resembles that of the bourgeois nationalist movements of backward countries, which Trotsky called *sui generis* Bonapartists.³

After several decades, we can affirm that the CCP bureaucracy took a similar course to that of these bourgeois nationalist movements, many of which morphed from *sui generis* Bonapartism to classical Bonapartism. When they saw themselves losing their dispute with imperialism, they consolidated themselves in the administration of their bourgeois economy and the preservation of their bureaucratic caste privileges. To do so, they had to confront the mass movement. Just like Perón in Argentina evolved from a nationalist leader to the founder of Triple A (fascist paramilitary force) or Ortega in Nicaragua went from democratic revolutionary to murderous dictator, Maoism generated a bureaucratic caste that ended up restoring capitalism in China and did not hesitate to repress those who tried to question its power with blood and fire in Tiananmen in 1989.

FROM DENG TO TODAY: THE CAPITALIST RESTORATION

The year 1978 marks a turning point in China's economy and the bureaucratic project. Confirming Trotsky's predictions on the Soviet bureaucracy becoming an agent of capitalist restoration, its Chinese counterpart, with Deng Xiaoping at the head, opened the country to the capitalist world market.

"The deep reforms initiated in 1978 included the de-collectivization of agriculture, the opening of China to foreign investors and the granting of licenses to launch private companies. This denationalization of services, together with the end of the Cold War and the rise of international trade,

*allowed the country to begin to register the rapid growth that Mao had failed to obtain, despite the fact that its planned economy had significantly increased the training of technical professionals that began to sustain the country during the 80s. The opening policy also triggered the market abroad, especially in the field of exports."*⁴

From this decision onward, successive measures adopted by the Chinese bureaucratic power advanced down that path: *"In the third Plenary of 1984 it was seen how CCP general secretary Hu Yaobang abandoned the idea of a planned economy and the times of 'urban economic reform' were inaugurated. In the 1993 Plenary, Jiang Zemin initiated the time of the 'socialist market economy'"*⁵ European newspapers described Jiang⁶ in a similar vein: *"He spoke of socialism to support the freedom of prices, the liberalization of the financial sector,*



*the conversion of companies into entities with public and private shareholders, the establishment of a Social Security system and the privatization of new sectors, including real estate (though, mysteriously, he did not explain why it is essential that other areas of economic activity are not). He also announced the opening of all of China, and not only of the 'special zones' located on the coast, to foreign investments. And he said that unequal development must be accepted: more advanced areas must go faster, and this will help the rest of the country improve."*⁷ In those special areas, in order to install imperialist corporations, the government granted tax benefits and limited trade union rights.

Xi Jinping, the current president, took the bureaucratic dream to its greatest expression. Today, China is the second global capitalist

power, far exceeding Japan, it has an ambitious commercial expansion project called the “silk road” consisting of huge investments in infrastructure to facilitate its penetration and is the main trading partner of many countries in the world. It develops a truly imperialist policy on the Sea of China, which it shares with other Asian nations, and has been developing a strong advance in high-tech areas and in military development. In the political arena, Xi has sought to develop the regime’s Bonapartism to such an extent that he could be proclaimed a new emperor. Since the latest reforms, he can be re-elected eternally.

CLOUDS OF CRISIS OVER THE TRIUMPHALIST POSTURING

One of the main explanations for the enormous and vertiginous Chinese industrial



development that made it the “factory of the world” was its cheap, nearly free, labor for capitalist investments. The policy of industrial relocations that moved huge manufacturing enterprises from the United States and other powers to “communist” China in the 1980s, benefited from Chinese workers who worked for a handful of dollars, living in subhuman conditions, and even had “hot beds” very close to the production lines, like in the early stages of capitalist industrial development. This super-exploited workforce provided such a profit that it compensated the extra expenses in transport by avoiding the industrial wages paid in the US, around 3,000 dollars a month.

China’s so-called *iron bowl*, which guaranteed all Chinese people labor, food, education and

health, was gradually replaced by the *porcelain bowl*, which suppressed these collective rights with the false promise of individual triumph in the capitalist market.

Thus, cheap products *made in China* invaded the the world’s supermarkets, achieving an economy that was growing at a record rate of 10% a year. Chinese growth does not have a great secret: it is a gigantic extraction of surplus value, subjecting its working class to enormous levels of super-exploitation that, coupled with the political stability ensured by the bureaucratic dictatorship, was very attractive for the profit-thirsty capitalists.

But this capitalist “development” did not succeed without experiencing huge contradictions. In 1989 a popular uprising, led by students and supported by broad layers of workers and the Chinese people, led a national demand against bureaucracy and the political regime for a democratic opening and participation in decisions: it was the uprising of Tiananmen Square. There were even bureaucratic sectors that reflected the crises and contradictions within the CCP apparatus, who supported or at least adopted a friendly neutral position towards the movement. Tiananmen was the local reflection of a huge worldwide anti-bureaucratic wave that threw down the Berlin Wall and the old Stalinist regime of the USSR.

It is precisely the defeat of the Tiananmen uprising that made the process of capitalist restoration different in China than in the former USSR and Eastern Europe. The Chinese process was much more vertiginous in overcoming the resistance of the mass movement. The control of the CCP apparatus was much stronger and became uniform, increasingly emphasizing its Bonapartist character, its dictatorship over the whole society. The persecution of opponents, the great-Chinese oppression over entire territories such as Tibet or the current attempt to liquidate democratic clauses in the status of Hong Kong, the prohibition of independent unions and opposition parties, a citizen oversight which will now require facial scanning to surf the Internet, are some of the characteristics of a regime that at times resembles the Big Brother of Orwell’s *1984*.

The crisis of the imperialist economy that broke out in 2007/2008 will soon impact the Chinese economy, that carries the weight of false expectations. At that time, more than one liberal



propagandist said that the “Chinese locomotive” would serve to overcome the world capitalist crisis, turning the *emerging* power into the new *dominant* power in the face of the obvious decline of the US, the European Union and Japan.

The last few years have diluted these exaggerations. The Chinese economy saw part of its exports to the imperialist central markets decline. It had to encourage the development of an important domestic market and a new Chinese middle class, while its growth rates decreased from 10 to 6% or less annually. As a result of the imminent deceleration of the world economy, it further lowered its growth forecasts. The increase in the “cost” of their work force due to labor demands also caused a relocation of capital to other countries in the region, such as Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia, with much lower wages.

Finally, as a direct consequence of the world imperialist economic crisis, the development of the “trade crisis” with the US reflects a sharp struggle between the planet’s largest power and the one that is emerging as its competitor for world surplus value. The dispute does not only affect the commercial exchange that generates a huge surplus in favor of the Asian giant, but also its plan for the development of new technologies, a key aspect in the fight to dominate the capitalist world market.

Chinese capitalist development has resulted in a serious increase in social inequality

and greatly aggravated the tensions today contained by bureaucracy. There is a very large immigration from the countryside to the cities that has modified much of China’s traditional demography in recent decades, but this immigration does not have the necessary social safety nets. The rise of a middle class benefiting from economic growth is accompanied by a huge social inequality between hundreds of millions of poor people and the millionaires that benefit from the bureaucratic capitalist model. There are at least three millionaires in the CCP Central Committee of 300 members.

China was the planet’s nation that grew the most in these times. According to the World Bank, its Gross Domestic Product tripled and its exports quadrupled in three decades. This has led the Chinese bureaucracy to argue that 700 million people were lifted out of poverty. However, behind bureaucratic arguments, other data corroborates the distortion of this capitalist “growth”: *“Far from the images of skyscrapers in Shanghai and Chinese billionaires traveling the world quenching their appetite for exoticism, 40% of Chinese people still live in rural areas, mostly working on small farms with incomes that would place them in extreme poverty in any country of the developed world. In many cases they are populations that eat little and have limited access to drinking water and basic services, while the urban 60%,*

a mass that works about 13 hours a day, between six and seven days a week, in deplorable security conditions, does not live much better, though the difference in access to basic services has been enough to increase the cultural division in the country.”⁸

In times of economic slowdown, trade war and clouds of global recession, these contradictions will develop more rapidly. The crisis is already impacting and will profoundly affect Xi Jinping’s China and reveal that its 70th anniversary celebrations were actually a great show of force to hide the crisis.

TIANANMEN AND HONG KONG

It is valid to wonder why the Chinese giant, its heavy bureaucracy, its new emperor, who paraded showing all his power, cannot stop a community of just seven million inhabitants, when it dominates 1,400 million people with an iron fist. Why do the increasingly radical mass protests of insurgent Hong Kong, not lead it to drown the uprising in blood and fire as it did in Tiananmen 30 years ago?



The rope is tightening. Xi’s exasperation leads him to say: “*Whoever takes up separatism in any region of China ... will be reduced to dust and shattered.*” All this despite the fact that Hong Kong not only represents a very small sector of Chinese territory and population, but that its economy and Chinese businesses there have decreased greatly in proportion to what they represented 20 years ago.

It is clear that the world situation has changed a lot since 1989. The imperialist crisis is greater and the relation with its now rival in the contest for the distribution of surplus value is not the same as

then. Hence, the threats of sanctions and various blackmails used to negotiate in better conditions with Xi’s bureaucracy. The struggles of the peoples in the world, from the Arab Spring to the independence of Catalonia, the wave of uprisings and revolutions in Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Honduras, Iraq, Ethiopia, the Lebanon that are currently shaking the world, also conditions China. But Xi’s central fear, without a doubt, is what a false step in Hong Kong could cost in its repercussion inside China. It is evident that storm clouds that could shake the Asian giant appear over Xi’s triumphant posturing. If these clouds end up producing an open storm and the working class and the Chinese people come out in a frontal fight against the regime, the turn of events in that region of the world and its worldwide impact will be qualitative.

In this perspective, the construction of a revolutionary anti-bureaucratic and anti-capitalist alternative is an urgent and strategic task for those of us who integrate the ISL with the intention of taking up the enormous tasks that times impose on revolutionaries. 🇨🇳

1. The Chinese bureaucracy advised the Indonesian CP to subordinate itself to the bourgeois nationalist government of Sukarno, which ended up massacring the communists.
2. Marxism has used the concept of Bonapartism to define a regime in which the ruling class cannot govern by democratic methods and does so through a government supported by the police and military apparatus. As a regime that defends the interests of the exploiting class or the oppressive bureaucratic caste, it appears as an authoritarian “personal regime” that rises above society and “reconciles” the interests of social classes. Hence the analogy with Napoleon Bonaparte.
3. A variant of classical Bonapartism, described by Trotsky. While the former is typical of governments that defend the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie and use dictatorial methods against the working class and mass movement, *sui generis* Bonapartism is typical of bourgeois nationalist governments that, like Cárdenas in Mexico or Perón’s first administration in Argentina, had strong disputes with imperialism over the distribution of local surplus value and, in order to face it, had to rely on mass mobilization, given the structural weakness of the capitalist classes they represented.
4. *Evolution of the Chinese economy: journey to the past to understand the present*, on the APD website, 3/14/18.
5. *The Third Plenary is coming, the most important political act in China*, by Andrea Pira, on the website china-files.com, 11/5/13.
6. Jiang Zemin: CCP General Secretary from 1989 to 2002 and President of the People’s Republic of China from 1993 to 2003.
7. *Comunismo de mercado chino*, *El País* (Spain), 17/10/92.
8. *La otra cara de China...*, *Infobae*, 31/10/19.

Feminism in Debate, REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

The feminist wave is a substantial component of the new global rise in struggle and its revolutionary processes. In much of the world, women and the LGBT+ movement lead huge struggles for their rights and, in that dynamic, question the capitalist and patriarchal system. The International Socialist League actively participates in these struggles from a working class and socialist perspective to contribute to the construction of a revolutionary feminism deeply linked to the struggles of the working class, the youth and the people to turn everything around.

A fundamental contribution to take up this political challenge is the development of materials that allow debate on the most controversial problems that this reality poses. This is the objective of publishing **Feminism in Debate, Reform or Revolution?**, a new book by La Montaña Socialist Editions that adds to several previous works. In this collective elaboration, we return to old debates that the feminist tide has reopened, as well as new and complex questions raised by reality.

Among those reemerging debates, we address the patriarchy-state relationship, the dividing line between different reformist currents and revolutionary feminism, as well as the construction of the latter. In turn, with respect to new debates, we include the right to abortion that is in dispute today, the religious-political fundamentalist crusade, the validity or not of punitivism as a



response to sexist violence; the dilemmas of surrogacy, domestic work and prostitution or sex work; identity and intersectional politics and the challenges of the LGBTI+ movement.

To purchase the book, ask the comrade who offered you this magazine, or write us at www.lamontaña.com

