

the Communist Party

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY – The line running from Marx to Lenin to the foundation of the Third International and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy in Leghorn (Livorno) 1921, and from there to the struggle of the Italian Communist Left against the degeneration in Moscow and to the rejection of popular fronts and coalition of resistance groups – The tough work of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and the party organ, in contact with the working class, outside the realm of personal politics and electoralist manoeuvres

newspaper of the
international communist party

Sept - October 2019
Issue 15 | 25¢ 25p

The Stresses, Strains and Chaos of Brexit

Britain has become a curious place in recent years as the Brexit saga rumbles on, showing no signs of reaching a conclusion. In our press we have characterized it as a bourgeois argument about how best to make the UK more “globally competitive”, primarily by imposing worse conditions on the working class. There is intense and often bitter disagreement on all sides about how to achieve this. The pro-Europeans hold up, for example, BMW in Oxford as a great example of the benefits of the EU, but keep quiet about the fact that the bulk of manufacturing is being exported to “low cost” countries either in the EU or countries linked to it (such as Turkey), which in turn reduces workers’ bargaining power. On the other side the globalists want to make London “Singapore on the Thames” and open “free ports” in places like Hull, burning all the regulations that (theoretically, at least) create a level capitalist playing field across the EU. And thirdly, companies whose interests are limited, or largely limited, to the British domestic market, argue a “Britain first” position that appeals to naked chauvinism.

The British working class is therefore the victim of a struggle between the interests of domestic, European and global (mainly American) capital. The farce that is playing out in parliament and the media reflects this struggle, but also deliberately distorts and obscures the underlying realities.

Our understanding of the anti-working class nature of all of these positions should not however be interpreted as indifference. Brexit could have a devastating effect on workers in many sectors. What happens when car workers are put on short hours or the plant closed? What happens to agricultural workers who would be thrown out of work when 30-40% WTO tariffs are slapped on beef and lamb exports? And of course, Brexit has the potential to disrupt the lives of millions of migrant workers and their families.

Moreover, the entire Brexit “debate” has thrown up some atrocious demagoguery designed to mislead and disorient the working class. All sides in this democratic contest base the legitimacy of their position on “the will of the people”, thereby exposing the very absurdity of the expression, and indeed, the absurd pretensions of democracy itself. We see millionaires railing against the rich elite, Lords draped in ermine railing against the privileged elite, globalists railing against globalism and well-heeled, overpaid London journalists railing against the metropolitan elite, all in the name of “the people”. It is the same on both sides: Ministers like Philip Hammond, who reduced thousands of people to dependence on food banks, have the nerve to tell us we will all be poorer outside the EU!

Such rank hypocrisy is easy to debunk but it has a strong appeal to the petty bourgeoisie. Though economically weak, this class is numerically strong and it is the class that various bourgeois factions are most intent on mobilizing behind their projects, because they are susceptible to the most philistine arguments, for example the notion that “the Establishment” is in league with foreign capitalists to undermine the British (or English or Scottish etc.) “way of life” and “culture”. The petty bourgeoisie is incapable of creating a coherent ideology of its own; rather, it nurses a whole ragbag of resentments and grievances that provide fertile ground for opportunist politicians. These grievances, real or imagined, are poisonous to the working class because they identify the wrong enemies (or the right enemies, but for the wrong reasons) so we cannot remain indifferent to them, either.

The parliamentary clash over whether the UK leaves the EU with or without a “deal” on 31 October (Hallowe’en! – but there are only tricks, no treats in store) is escalating out of control. In 2019 the Conservative Party clung to a precarious House of Commons majority with the help of Northern Ireland’s loyalist Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) but was unable to get a vote in favor of the withdrawal agreement (WA) negotiated with the European Union. The determined opposition of the most extreme pro-Brexit faction, the European Research Group, and the DUP, blocked the WA. The majority of the Conservative Party’s membership convinced itself that Theresa May had been too soft in the negotiations and that someone who could shout louder would get a better deal.

Enter Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson, Old Etonian, Daily Telegraph columnist, ex-Mayor of London. The “anti-Establishment” candidate.

Johnson immediately purged 21 pro-EU Conservative MPs, wiping out the Government majority, and prorogued parliament in an attempt to drive through Brexit by executive fiat. The left (meaning, in this case, everyone from Tory dissidents to anarchists) mobilized demonstrations in defense of democracy under the banner “Stop the Coup”. The Supreme Court agreed, declaring the prorogation null and void.

But, legal detail aside, what does “defense of democracy” really mean? Democracy is the bourgeois state, pure and simple. It exists to maintain the idea that the bourgeois state is an expression of that (fictional) “will of the people”. The mistake made by Boris Johnson and his éminence grise, Dominic Cummings, was in claiming that they, and not the Mother of Parliaments, with all its arcane procedures, represented the true “will of the people” based on the 2016 referendum result.

That Margaret Thatcher started it

The current parliamentary deadlock reflects the deep disagreements about the future direction of the British economy. Is it inside or outside the European Union? By the late fifties, much of British industry was no longer able to compete with the USA and the “defeated” nations of Germany and Japan. This, together with decolonialization, fanned seething resentments in the British petty bourgeoisie, which already regarded the bourgeoisie’s decision to throw in its lot in with the Common Market in the 1970s as an “act of surrender”.

Margaret Thatcher, Britain’s Prime Minister throughout the 1980s, therefore had to perform a delicate balancing act. She won a series of battles against the British working class, notably the coal miners in 1984-5, clearing the way for deindustrialization. She promoted the European single market, seeing a huge opportunity for Britain to sell financial and other services to European companies and, in turn, to be a conduit for inward investment. London became Europe’s financial capital. Economically, the UK’s future seemed clear, although some Cabinet ministers such as Michael Heseltine wanted to go further in reducing American influence.

On the other hand, Thatcher’s electoral victories depended entirely on fanning the flames of anti-European (and, in particular, anti-German and anti-French) resentment. Her 1988 speech to the College of Europe (the “Bruges speech”) gave the rural backwoodsmen of the party encouragement. Over the course of three decades, they have steadily grown in strength to the point that in 2019 they elected someone they considered “one of their own” to lead the Tory Party with a crushing majority over his rivals. In today’s Conservative Party, saying anything in favor of the European Union is now suicidal. And Boris Johnson, who had made all the right pro-European and liberal noises to ensure his election as Mayor of London in 2008, now made all the right anti-European and reactionary noises to ensure his election as the leader of the Conservative Party.

Such is the utter dishonesty and rank opportunism of bourgeois democracy.

The political crisis caused by Brexit

The European Union has also provided a useful scapegoat for mainstream politicians, even those who own holiday villas in Tuscany or on the Algarve. This is not, of course,

Hong Kong working class will return to fight only for itself against patriots and autonomists

For more than two months now, hundreds of thousands of protesters in the streets of Hong Kong have been clashed with the police, so much so that it is feared that the Chinese army will intervene.

The first demonstrations were launched by the Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF), a platform that unites about fifty pro-democracy groups, with protest marches on March 31 and April 28. In June, membership of the Front grew enormously, with impressive demonstrations.

Faced with this massive opposition, the Hong Kong government announced the suspension of the bill on 15 June.

But this did not stop the protests, which continued uninterrupted until September. The most significant: July 1, on the occasion of the 22nd anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to China, with hundreds of thousands of protesters, a group of whom broke into Parliament waving the flag of the former colonizer. On 5 August there was a general strike in the city, which, according to figures provided by the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, one of the main trade union centers in the metropolis, employed with pro-democracy forces, participated in 350 thousand, and which hit hard the transport, with 200 flights cancelled and the blockade of the subway buses and offices; on 18 August when in response to police brutality the CHRF convened a peaceful demonstration in which, according to the organizers, participated in 1.7 million.

In addition to the withdrawal of the bill, the protesters call for: the resignation of the Governor of Hong Kong, Carrie Lam; the release and acquittal of the arrested protesters; an “independent investigation” into police violence; the withdrawal of the qualification of “revolt” with which the authorities have defined the protest. All of this was within the framework of a general demand for greater democracy.

The definitive withdrawal of the proposed law on extradition, announced on 4 September by the Governor of Hong Kong, has not brought back order: the law has given rise to protests, but there are much deeper contradictions that undermine the social peace of the great metropolis.

“One country, two systems”

Hong Kong has been a colony practically since 1841, when British troops occupied it during the First Opium War, which was formalized the following year with the Treaty of Nanking which sanctioned the Chinese defeat and the beginning of the series of so-called “unequal treaties” that foreign powers imposed on China to subdue the great Empire to imperialistic appetites. Apart from the Japanese occupation during the Second World War, Hong Kong will remain a British colony until July 1, 1997. From the 1980s onwards, Great Britain and the People’s Republic of China began to negotiate the future of the metropolis, reaching an agreement in 1984 that on July 1, 1997 the colony that would come under Chinese administration.

This agreement stipulated that Hong Kong should maintain “a high degree of autonomy” with “independent” legislative and judicial powers, democratic government and “fundamentally unchanged” the laws in force at the time of signing the Declaration. The only areas of concern for the People’s Republic would have been foreign policy and defence. Hong Kong would maintain until 2047 its “economic system” and its “social organization”, that is, its “way of life”, the customary individual and corporate, civil and commercial law inherited from British rule.

The State of false Chinese communism with the formula “one country two systems”, which expresses the principle of the unity of a nation with a single destiny, would grant that portion its own “economic system”, different from the

so-called “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. The same formula is also proposed for the return of Taiwan to its homeland.

The Jacobin centralism of the People’s Republic and the will to defend its territorial integrity by force is another confirmation that the economic and social regime in China is capitalist and that the theory of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” is nothing more than a formula to cover the brutal exploitation of the proletariat. The emphasis on the “two systems”, capitalist one as much as the other, rather than wanting to preserve in Hong Kong a type of society qualitatively different from that in mainland China, has only served to allow the trafficking of the Chinese giant, which has been useful to recognize the former colony a “special administrative” regime. So the formula “one country two systems” worked well. Over time, however, it has undergone changes that have affected the degree of autonomy granted to Hong Kong. This is where the current dispute revolves, the causes of which are all economic.

The decline of the former colony

Under colonial rule, while mainland China was an economically backward country with an almost exclusively peasant population and limited industrial areas, the influx of foreign capital allowed Hong Kong to develop trade and manufacturing activities, making the peninsula an advanced stronghold of capitalism in the East, an urban metropolis with a highly concentrated and combative proletariat, as evidenced by the great workers’ struggles of the twenties. As well as being a regional trade hub and an important industrial centre, Hong Kong has built its prosperity on its role as an intermediary between foreign capital and the vast continental hinterland, a function strengthened with the birth of the People’s Republic.

But with the progressive opening of the People’s Republic in the late seventies, the Hong Kong foreign market it became less and less important for the Chinese economy. In recent years its financial role has been undermined by other markets that have developed in China, such as the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges. More than forcing the former colony to become “Chinese”, it is Chinese society and economy that have come to host more and more monstrous concentrations like Hong Kong. The “integration”, in the practical life, is therefore almost already done.

The Hong Kong peninsula has suffered a decline not because it is conditioned by the central government in Beijing but because of its new position in the global market. But it is only a relative decline compared to the mother country: Hong Kong remains a financial and commercial centre of world importance, one of the areas where the capitalist mode of production has reached the apex of its parable. When it returned to China in 1997, Hong Kong was home to about one fifth of China’s entire economy. Today, after the tremendous development on the continent, Hong Kong produces only 3% of China’s GDP. The former colony is no longer so fundamental to the trade of Chinese capitalists as to justify the granting of special treatment.

China’s pressure to integrate more closely with the metropolis and to erode the terms of “special status” is therefore already increasing. This puts everyone in the peninsula in turmoil and benefits from the economic advantages of the “special position”.

Social causes of protests

To explain the vast movement that has developed, one has to dig into the contradictions of the capitalist monster that is Hong Kong, distinguishing the role and interests of the social classes involved.

First of all, the law on extradition has been criticised by the commercial and financial giants based there. The loss of

the “protection” of such legislation would make the citadel stretching out over the South China Sea unattractive for capitalists, since there would no longer be any difference between Hong Kong and any of the large Chinese metropolises, Shanghai and Shenzhen, which are all on the rise. They therefore supported the protest movement against the bill: in June, more than a hundred companies, with the consent of the various international chambers of commerce, encouraged the participation of their employees in the protests, granting “flexible” working hours or even closing their offices.

It should be noted that the autonomist tendency of the Hong Kong bourgeoisie comes not only from the interest in preserving its business paradise, but also from the desire to maintain the freedom to squeeze its own proletariat “autonomously”, without the intrusions of Beijing.

But the Hong Kong bourgeoisie is beginning to feel the effects of the current protests, with the fall in the stock exchange, and fears the serious consequences that an intervention by the Chinese army could have on the city’s economy. But what he fears most is the possibility that from the current protests a working class movement will develop with very different objectives than the current democratic demands. In the case of an autonomous entry of the working class into the scene for its own objectives, the Hong Kong bourgeoisie would have no problem in reaching an agreement with Beijing for the violent repression of the proletariat.

So the bourgeoisie now wants an end to the protests and a return to order and discipline. This is the sense of the appeals to the beginning of September of the main banks of Hong Kong (HSBC, Standard Chartered and Bank of East Asia) and of a dozen other large groups that in the city’s newspapers have condemned the “violence” and called for the return of social peace.

The movement of young people and students, on the other hand, is more determined to oppose integration into the Chinese motherland. The petit-bourgeois classes feel threatened by a complete integration into the People’s Republic. Behind the words of Democracy and Freedom there is a defensive motion of these strata, nostalgic for some past privileges and appearances of Western lifestyles, but also the typical uncertainty of the half classes that, crushed by capital, seek protection in vain in law and in the State.

This has given rise to a “democratic” and micro-nationalist movement, strongly anti-Chinese, which in the desperate struggle for autonomy from the People’s Republic goes so far as to appeal to American imperialism and the former British colonizer. The most violent actions come from these very sectors, which in general have a great media visibility, especially for the references to an alleged noble struggle for freedom that so much pleases the putrid Western democrats.

If, on the other hand, it has been possible for hundreds of thousands of protests to follow one another, it is certainly because these demonstrations have been swollen by the participation of the proletariat. The Hong Kong working class certainly does not benefit from its wealth. Since the arrival of British imperialism, that prosperity has been based on the ferocious exploitation of workers. Even today, industrialists in Hong Kong squeeze the proletariat for more than 50 hours a week. One fifth of the population is in poverty. The minimum wage is set at just over \$4.5 per hour, which is largely insufficient for one of the most expensive cities in the world.

The dramatic aspect for the proletariat is the housing issue. In little more than 1,000 square kilometers are crammed about 7.5 million men, and this makes Hong Kong one of the places with the highest density in the world. This situation is compounded by the fact that, under pressure from a few landowners

The Educators' Struggle is the Workers' Struggle!

CUNY workers,

Once again, we are in the midst of stalled contract negotiations with the university and the state of New York. "Our" negotiating team (who never cease to remind us of their supposed electoral mandate) fail to fight for any of the meaningful demands we make, in particular that of \$7K per course for adjuncts. This is intentional: the leadership of the PSC-CUNY are capitalist lackeys. Their negotiations are a process of finding out where they can retreat in our fight against the State. Later, they will present themselves as the conciliatory voice of reason above a dangerous rank-and-file. They do not dream of our liberation – instead, they lust after their own private benefit, as technocrats serving the bourgeoisie.

The petty-bourgeois elements that make up the right wing of this union prove this fact about themselves when they make "professionalization" a central tenet of their negotiations with the university. They do so to divide us from our friends in other occupations, who struggle for the same things as we do: strong wage increases, stabilization of precarious employment, improved working conditions, more funding, and more hiring. But the PSC leadership have made clear their opinion that we are somehow above the rest of the working class. One of them scornfully told a Graduate Center chapter meeting that "the other unions won't accept" the wage increases that we demand. Our illustrious bargaining team, they plead, is not at fault for the failure of negotiations, nor is the State that this union bows down to, but rather the rest of the working class is responsible!

This is not the position of a militant class union. It is the bleating of a regime union that is in the hands of the bourgeois State. When the PSC leadership emphasizes professionalization, militants reply: we fight alongside the whole working class! When they blame other unions for our troubles, militants reply: all trade unionists are our comrades! When they attack the rank-and-file \$7K or Strike movement, militants reply: the leadership are traitors in the class struggle!

Our real liberation as educators, and the liberation of our students, will only come with the liberation of society as a whole. This social liberation will be communism. The means to achieve it is the revolutionary struggle of the international working class to overthrow capitalism. The International Communist Party is the vanguard of that struggle. Our party understands that building militant class unions is essential to the success of the workers' revolution. We take part in rank-and-file campaigns around the world to lay the foundations for unions that are able to revolt against the bourgeoisie. You can help us fight for educators and for the whole working class by joining our party.

Workers of the World, Unite!

Hong Kong...

who control the property market, only luxury housing is being built there. The price of rents is therefore skyrocketing, so much so that tens of thousands of workers are forced to live in cells of a few square metres, some of which, called 'coffins', are two square metres in size. The participation of proletarians in the ongoing struggles therefore takes place under the pressure of precise material needs.

But, as far as we know, without making any claims of their own. They therefore seem to be towing half classes and students, who soften the movement with the rotten democratic ideology. In Hong Kong, the proletariat is now called upon to fight for objectives that are not its own. The five demands made by the movement have nothing to do with the interests of the proletariat, with its class defense, are objectives of the small bourgeoisie that would like to involve the working class in this struggle for democracy and autonomy.

The proletariat, certainly determined to move for its material interests, can only do so with its class autonomy, political, ideological and organizational, certainly not under the direction of opposing social classes and bourgeois objectives, ending up being enlisted on one of the two bourgeois fronts, as has historically happened and continues to happen unfortunately, taking the form of a struggle in the Hong Kong question between a pro-democracy faction, autonomist and pro-western, and the historical Chinese homeland.

The process of disintegration of the Chinese countryside frees up millions of peasants who pour into the cities. In China, this process is taking on enormous proportions. It is estimated that over the next few years, an additional 250 million Chinese will be upset. It is an unstoppable process that the CCP deludes itself of trying to manage. Clusters, clusters, cities, urban areas of regional dimensions would form due to the proximity of huge metropolises. The migration from the countryside to industrial areas that would

have an army of more than 50 million proletarians at their disposal would be poured into them. The one that would form around Shanghai would have 150 million inhabitants; another, called Jing-Jin-Ji (Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei) 112 million. They will be wonderful explosive proletarian concentrations where capitalism will make a disastrous failure in the precipitation of the world crisis, communism objectively presses and the struggle for communism will mature until it just wants to be triggered.

Hong Kong's future is therefore already understood in this inevitable evolution, with the further strengthening of its international role as a financial centre, transport and trade centre. Moreover, the fact that Hong Kong's integration with the mother country is not waiting for 2047 is witnessed by majestic infrastructural works such as the series of 55 km long bridges, partly under the sea, connecting the peninsula to Macao.

It is inevitable that sooner or later legislation will also adapt to the process. So Chinese capitalism will not give in to the autonomist demands of Hong Kong whose fate is marked. A unification that is certainly not to the detriment of the future class struggle.

Neither Democracy nor Chinese Homeland

Whatever the form of the state, democratic in Hong Kong or one-party in Beijing, it does not change its nature as a bourgeois class, a bureaucratic and military machine aimed at the subjugation of the working class to the needs of capital.

Only an autonomous and supportive intervention of the working class of Hong Kong and China would upset the plans of the opposing factions.

So much so that the prospect of the working class entering the scene autonomously with its own claims disturbs the dreams of its exploiters in Hong Kong as well as in Beijing. An explosion of workers' struggle in Hong Kong could extend to the metropolises of nearby Guangdong, where millions of proletarians are squeezed out of Chinese and international capital.

It is a not without foundation perspective if one retraces the history of the Chinese labor movement, with the great proletarian struggles of the 1920s characterized by class solidarity that transcended the boundaries of companies, sectors and localities. We remember the seafarers' strike of 1922 which, supported by the general strike of the whole colony and by the solidarity of the proletariat of all the Chinese cities, after 56 days of struggle bent British imperialism; and the Hong Kong-Canton strike of 1925-1926, the longest in the history of the workers' movement (from June 1925 to October 1926!).), with about 250,000 workers on strike in Canton, to which were added another 100,000 Hong Kong workers who left the city and moved en masse to Canton, where the proletariat was armed and practically controlled the city.

But today, an autonomous resumption of the proletarian struggle must necessarily pass through the affirmation within it of a party that is based on two cornerstones: the rejection of nationalism and the rejection of inter-classism cloaked in democracy.

As in all the other capitalist metropolises, the proletariat must not allow itself to be deceived by the democratic myth that the small bourgeoisie passes on in all corners of the world: Occupy, Arab spring, yellow vests, although at the base there is the worsening of the living conditions of masses of workers, have all been inter-classist movements that divert the struggle of the proletariat towards objectives that are not theirs and compatible with the domination of capital.

Brexit...

... a purely British phenomenon. But it has added to the political crisis. Most of all, their rhetoric has given credibility to the most rabid anti-Europeans led by the demagogue Nigel Farage, first with the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and more recently the Brexit Party. It was in order to counter the electoral threat of UKIP and neutralize the anti-European wing of the Conservative Party that Prime Minister David Cameron called a leave/remain referendum.

This was a huge miscalculation. Having spent months attacking the European Union and trying to negotiate more privileged terms of membership (Cameron often faced the cameras in Brussels with his stern face, "battling for Britain" like some comic book World War 2 hero) Cameron's leadership of the remain campaign was unconvincing, to put it mildly. Moreover, the entire Cameron government, and in particular the pro-European Chancellor George Osborne, had spent six years ruthlessly attacking working class living standards. By contrast, the leave campaign was free to blame austerity, the loss of British manufacturing, the near bankruptcy of the National Health Service and (always an emotional issue) the loss of "our fish" on the EU. It was also free to make whatever absurd promises of future prosperity ("sunlit uplands") it liked once "we" had "taken our country back". These arguments, as well as nakedly chauvinist

demonization of immigrants (and not just immigrants from the EU) proved extremely popular with the petty bourgeoisie, but also with some sections of the working class in regions hardest hit by deindustrialization.

Consequently, the referendum ended with a narrow victory for leave, a result that Boris Johnson himself did not expect, let alone plan for, throwing the United Kingdom into the ongoing political crisis.

The ties that bind the Republic of Ireland to the UK

Even though the Republic of Ireland achieved its independence almost a century ago its economy remained tied to that of the United Kingdom for decades. From the 1920s onwards the British Government maintained a Common Travel Area in which there was an unrestricted right of Irish citizens to travel without a passport, work and settle in the UK. The Irish pound was tied to sterling. And until the 1960s, Ireland was under the political control of a party (Fianna Fáil) that drew its support from rural farmers who – while playing lip service to the nationalist, anti-British tradition of the 1916 uprising – sold the bulk of their produce to the UK. As agriculture became more efficient and there were few opportunities in the cities, a large proportion Ireland's "surplus" population continued to migrate to the UK.

The UK and the Republic of Ireland both applied at the same time for Common Market membership in the 1960s and finally joined in 1973, bringing both parts of the island of Ireland in 1973 within this enlarged economic bloc. Nevertheless, the economic impact was very different. In the eighties and nineties the Republic saw an economic boom, largely thanks to its geographical position and language, which made it an appealing base for American capital to penetrate European markets. But Northern Ireland lost out as deindustrialization hit Loyalist communities hard, and discrimination hit Republican communities even harder.

The situation was eased somewhat by the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which sought to bring to an end the 30-year conflict between these two communities: for the first time since partition, Ireland could function as a single economy within the European single market. Brexit puts this in doubt, and this has proved to be the main sticking point preventing a conclusion to the entire Brexit saga.

The end to the free movement of commodities would have a disproportionately adverse impact on the Irish Republic, not just because of disruption to trade across the land border, but also trade across the Irish Sea. The UK is the second biggest customer for Irish goods, but it is also the main transit route for goods to reach Europe through British ports, road, rail and the Channel Tunnel. The situation has been rendered insoluble by the British government's so-called "red lines", which require the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to leave the European Union's customs union as a single unit.

Consequently, the UK and EU negotiators agreed the so-called "backstop" as a temporary measure keeping Northern Ireland in the customs union, and under the same regulatory regime, until a comprehensive free trade agreement is signed or alternative measures to border checks can be found. This would keep the Irish border open, protecting the single market, customs union and the Good Friday Agreement. For the EU, this is critical: otherwise there would be a gaping hole in the single market, allowing, for example, lorryloads of goods into the EU via Northern Ireland while dodging EU tariffs and regulatory standards. The EU has therefore given its absolute support to the Republic of Ireland in any Brexit negotiations, while the Democratic Unionist Party and the right wing of the Tory Party have dug in their heels to resist any move that puts Northern Ireland in an all-Ireland market separate from the UK.

However, this also gives the EU leverage over Ireland, which for years has attracted disproportionate inward investment through its low tax regime, with internet firms in particular basing their European operations in Ireland while legitimately dodging the payment of taxes on revenues derived from sales elsewhere in Europe. The EU is now insisting that taxes are paid in full.

The whole mess could have a particularly dire impact on the working class of Northern Ireland, which has been without a government and parliament since the alliance between Sinn Féin, the main Republican Party, and the DUP over a Renewable Energy Initiative that the DUP administered corruptly. The Northern Ireland economy is already under strain, with unemployment hovering around 50% since 2009 in some of the hardest hit areas. This provides opportunities for the paramilitaries to recruit. The imposition of a border would make things far, far worse.

At the time of writing the UK has proposed a bizarre "two-border" arrangement whereby Northern Ireland would be aligned with the EU on some regulatory issues and customs checks would be carried out a few miles back from the actual frontier. The EU has dismissed this. It appears that both sides are now blaming the other for the failure and that Boris Johnson's primary aim is to fight a chauvinistic election. He is no longer referring to the EU as "our friends

and partners" but "stubborn and unreasonable". But of course, an election cannot change reality and the stresses, strains and chaos will continue.

Democracy has no answer

Democracy is to bourgeois politics what the stock exchange is to bourgeois economics. It mediates and resolves the demands of the institutions and individuals who have the greatest investments in the system. All this is part of the normal functioning of capitalism. But at a certain point the system is thrown into an unsustainable disequilibrium. In the case of Brexit, the link between politics and economics is in this respect rather less opaque than usual: the currency speculators and hedge fund managers backing Brexit make life difficult for exporters and importers who would face all kinds of tariff and non-tariff barriers to their business; the capitalists that want to rip up EU regulations to push down workers' living standards cannot resolve their interests with those dependent on selling into European markets, and so on. The functioning of society can eventually come under an intolerable strain, which is why there are constant dire warnings against pushing solutions to extremes: Brexit will lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom, a return to the Troubles on the Irish border, etc.

The bourgeoisie can never bring capitalism entirely under control because capitalism itself is riven with contradictions that are beyond any human control. Nevertheless, the idea that Brexit shows that the British ruling class has lost the ability to resolve its differences is a dangerous one. The ruling class will always unite whenever it sees a threat from its true enemy: the working class.

Until then it will feel free to bicker amongst itself ad nauseam.

Letter from N. Ireland

In early 2017, it came out that a Renewable Heat Initiative by the state, meant to incentivise petit-bourgeois shop owners to use heating from renewable resources, had cost the state close to £500 million. This was because the money being paid out was greater than the cost of fuel, so profit could be made simply by heating one's home so long as renewable heat was used. Fraud in the system became rampant by about April of 2015, but was covered up by the Democratic Unionist Party that had implemented it, until January of 2017.

The scandal that broke out then triggered the collapse of the Stormont parliament, which since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement has required support from both the main Nationalist and Unionist parties, the DUP and Sinn Féin. The latter saw an opportunity to gain the upper hand in some of its desired policies that were and remain unacceptable to the unionists, such as the implementation of an Irish Language Act and the legalisation of same-sex marriage. The two parties have since been in a deadlock position even till now.

As always, this inter-bourgeois struggle has taken its greatest toll on the workers. To take the example of Derry, one of the lowest-performing cities in the UK, employment has hovered around 50% since 2009. The worst areas are those typically associated with the Catholic working class, such as Creggan and the Bogside. These areas remain largely ignored by the reformed police force the PSNI, and are largely left to the various paramilitary organisations remaining after the Good Friday Agreement.

The paramilitary organisations still remaining such as the UDA, UVF, and the "New" IRA, are largely criminal rackets now, engaging in extortion and acting as brutal police forces in working class areas. A common activity is "knee-capping" where drug dealers and other offenders are brought to secret locations and shot through the knees. Often times relatives and others in the community, out of terror for their own well-being, participate in the process. These paramilitary organisations have seen an increase in recruitment in the past few years, as the failure of the bourgeois state has become more apparent.

As well as this, the labyrinthine Brexit discussions have tied up the UK parliament and prevented it from taking control of the situation. Even if it wasn't so occupied, the DUP would vigorously oppose it, and the Tory's reliance on the party is well known by this point. As well as this, the possibility of a hard border has brought out Republican paramilitary activity further out.

These paramilitaries, more so than collaborationist trade unions, present a great threat to Northern Irish labour organisation, as they sap working class strength and redirect the class's militant struggle against sections of itself rather than the bourgeoisie. They replace the fight for the human community with that for the Irish national community.

Elections in Israel

Proletarians!

The "civil society" is convulsed, the bourgeois electoral system in Israel is a crossroad.

Next September, a new general election, full of bourgeois contradictions and a worrying tendency towards apathy and general fatigue of the working class, must be repeated after an unfortunate election of the Prime Minister Netanyahu, where a coalition government could not be formed between the various currents of the bourgeois parties, whether they call themselves the left or right.

But what has drawn the most attention of the bourgeois domination, has been the growing proportion of abstention.

It is not enough the indistinct and terrible means of propaganda and wash brain carried out today in the educational system of the bourgeois capitalism, putting the democratic system above all political value to bring the proletariat closer to the polls in a massive way, not even the war drums and the living conditions to which they are subjected, in a state of paranoia and widespread alertness, in a running tendency to no felt in mendicancy.

It is clear, for the bourgeois domain, that the survival of the bourgeois democratic institutions is possible with the immense participation of an increasingly apathetic working class. One could go so far and say that the entire creation of the Israeli State as such depends on the sacred union between the classes and their predisposition to die in the constant wars.

Within the Arab proletariat, the value of Israeli democracy is more and more simply what it is: a fraud. One of the biggest abstentions, more than the half of the population, shows the dissatisfaction with the political and social system destined to fail.

The capitalist social system, individualizing to the extreme, separating the proletarians from any form of union with different methods, in an abyss of personal perspective, egoistic and a social apathy with the consequence of the growing alienation of social relations.

Proletarians!

But it is the material conditions that today move the proletariat away from the bourgeois politics full of fraud, corruption, war and betrayal, and create in the proletarians hatred towards the entire corrupt political system, which tomorrow will drive it to the to the class struggle. With the deterioration of the material conditions of the life of the workers, the union between proletarians is a must, a necessity to defend their class interests.

Between these two variables, the foundations of the next revolution are laid, which includes not the "citizens" but the class regardless of their race, creed, or origin. No more citizens, but proletarians in struggle.

Our Party, organized today in the International Communist Party, owner of a unique strategy and tactics worldwide, the result of the study and historical experience of the communist movement, defends abstentionism not as a moral imperative against authority, nor as an abstract principle, but a real and proven tactic in the historical experience of strengthening the path of revolution, the empowerment of a lethargic working class, and that is why it calls proletarians to practical abstention.

And we say proletarians, no citizens, because as well as equality in bourgeois society it is a fraud, the same goes for the democratic decision of the most masked dictatorship over proletarians, and we include those who have no chance to vote, unlike all the fauna bourgeois.

We include them and tell them that the solution does not happen to obtain the right to vote, but the total suppression of the right to vote that is in itself, the right to fraud of the bourgeois dictatorship ad infinitum, and we call to organize around the workers' struggles towards the formation of an Class Workers Union, and then organize as a class for themselves, in the Communist Party. This is and will be the first step for the emancipation of the proletarians in Israel, of a democracy that is now sinking, and that although it already demonstrates all its fierce repression against a part of the proletariat, in the near future it will do so even with the same Hebrew proletariat, which lives in awe of a fraudulent democracy, supposedly the only one in Middle East.

The Communist Party is Printed and Produced by

Associazione La Sinistra Comunista - Casella Postale 1157 - 50121 Firenze - Italy

I.C.P. Editions - c/o 96 Bold Street - Liverpool L1 4HY - United Kingdom

C.L. Publishing - c/o 523 S.E. Morrison St. - Portland, OR 97214 - U.S.A.

international-communist-party.org