



BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

In each bulletin of CENA several organisations from the region have the chance to share their thoughts, their opinions and analysis with the international anti-imperialist movement. Either for the latest developments in our countries or about historical events and anniversaries, the exchange of information and experience is one of the most important parts of internationalism as we understand it.

In this bulletin you will read about the 95 years of the Young Communist League of Canada, their history and their struggles in the today's conditions. 2018 is also marking another very important anniversary, the anniversary of the 100 years since the November Revolution and SDAJ - Germany shares some information with us about this historical event.

You have also the chance to hear from JCP – Portugal about the 28th of March, National and World Youth Day. Our comrades from LCYU – Russia are explaining to us how the interests of the Russian youth and of the current capitalist government are incompatible and how they organise their struggles. UJCE from Spain is also giving us a brief idea of how the state of Spain use its own tools to attack the Spanish people by the escalation of repression. Furthermore, TKG – Turkey shares with us what difficulties the youth of Turkey is facing with the ongoing capitalist crisis and how it resists to this brutal attacks.

At last, you can find materials from the last festival of KNE in September and also learn about the solidarity mission of WFDY in Syria.

Iacovos Tofari
President of WFDY



The 95th anniversary of the Young Communist League



This year, as we celebrate the 95th anniversary of the Young Communist League, it is important to outline the relevance of this organization. The YCL-LJC is a unique organization that aims to convince the young generation of the urgent need to fight for a better world, a socialist world. Today, we can say that it is the first time since 1945 that youth face a more precarious future than their parents, and all this is to say why we need to organize youth as an entity of its own. Lenin said “frequently the middle aged and the aged do not know how to approach youth in the proper way. Youth must come to socialism in different ways by other paths, in other forms under other circumstances than their parents.”

In 1923, the YCL Canada was formed, under the name Young Workers League of Canada. In 1924, the war measures act had been lifted and the YWL officially changed its name to the young communist league of Canada. By this point, the YCL already had 25 branches and 1000 members, most of them being young immigrant workers. One of the first tasks of the YCL was the publication of its own paper, which was first called the Young Workers.

The YCL also helped lead the young pioneers, which was the childrens organization, and also had its own paper called young comrade, and its successor Always ready. During the late 20s, the major task of the YCL was to grow its organization. As such, in 1927, YCL secretary, Oscar Ryan undertook a six month tour, visiting 75 towns across the country, which was incredibly successful as there were 19 new YCL clubs, 5 pioneer clubs, 200 subscriptions for the young worker and 135 subscriptions for young comrade.

At this time, The YCL mainly focused on recruiting young industrial workers. For instance, In 1929, a number of YCL members in Montreal joined the building trades, and succeeded in forming a plumber apprentice union of 200 members. YCL members also assisted workers on strike, such as the striking coal miners of Drumheller Alberta.

Another important focus of YCL activity was anti war propaganda, particularly as the devastating impacts of the first world war was prevalent amongst Canadians. For instance in 1928, The YCL was active in a campaign that stood against the launching of two new battleships — and as a result of all this, the YCL continued to grow.

After the 1929 market crash and the beginnings of the great depression, the YCL tackled the task of organizing the unemployed and unorganized. They organized meetings of unemployed youth in Montreal, sometimes as many as 50 unemployed would join the YCL from one meeting alone. The YCL also worked on Workers Unity League campaigns to organize thousands of unorganized workers, and conducted the largest proportion of successful strikes during the Great Depression era.

The largest and most famous unemployed struggles was both the ‘On to Ottawa’ Trek and the BC Relief Camps workers strike. In Vancouver during the spring of 1935, there were many activities organized by Relief Camp workers and unemployed youth. During May Day that year, 35 000 people rallied at Stanley Park, Vancouver. Amongst these marchers 4000 high school students participated, who were mobilized by the YCL. So we can see how influential their role was in the young workers and youth movement.

The YCL was also active in the farming community, as they helped organize a contingent of young farmers in a 90 mile farmers hunger march to winnipeg in 1932, and as a result was growing in the rural areas. In northern Alberta alone, the YCL had 500 members in 1932, and during this period 18 YCL branches were formed in saskatchewan.

During this period, the YCL was also involved in the fight for the right to free speech, in which communists challenged the attacks of the police who sought to prevent open air meetings and street demonstrations, and all this related to the larger struggled for democracy and against the rise of fascism which highlighted the 1930s.

In 1931, the YCL actively supported the mass campaigns led by the Canadian Labour Defense League to free the eight imprisoned communist leaders and to remove the law that outlawed and banned the party from the criminal code. Over half a million people signed the CLDLs petitions, and hundreds of rallies, meetings and demonstrations were held to protest government repression.

On a general sense, The YCL still struggled with the the issue of being a so called “Junior Party”, meaning that it tended to be an organization of communists who were young, attempting to play the same role as the communist party, among youth, rather than a fully developed communist youth organization. By the sixth international of the Young Communist International, there was a new orientation for the communist youth movement, which was to transform the YCL into a mass organization, with the task of forging unity with progressive, socialist youth, and helping unite all youth against reaction and war— and for social progress. The YCL Canada did this through the formation of the Canadian Youth Congress led by the YCL General Secretary William Kashtan (who eventually became leader of the Communist Party).

The YCL was also setting up Labour youth colleges where 400 students were taking courses on marxism-leninism and other topics. During this time we were also mobilizing youth against fascism and war, using the tactic of the united front endorsed by Dimitrov and the International Communist Movement. For instance, many YCL members joined the Mackenzie-Papineau battalion to fight against fascism in Spain. Along with the 1600 Canadians who fought to defend the Republic in Spain, the YCL was also active on the grounds at home to collect money and organise the logistics to coordinate this massive enrollment campaign. These hard efforts made it possible for Canada, without any help from official authorities and despite opposition from some official authorities such as the nationalist Duplessis government in Québec which had ties with Franco’s troops, to become the country that sent the largest amount of brigadistas after France.

The emphasis to transform the YCL into a mass organization extended to its press as well, so the young worker became the advance and later the new advance, which was able to circulate 20 000 papers and was a broad magazine which included input from other progressive youth as well.

By 1940, the government used the war measures act to declare the party, YCL and other progressive organizations illegal, and so the communist movement was driven underground. Despite many members forced into hiding or in internment camps, the YCL continued to function during this period. For instance, they published an illegal paper, the Beacon. By then, the YCL changed its name into the National Federation of Labour Youth and organised around defeating fascism and solidarity with the Soviet Union.

After the Second World War, the YCL Canada was one of the founding members of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, which we are still members of today. And through its involvement of this organization, the YCL has engaged in campaigns for peace and solidarity, aiming at showing the youth of Canada that there is no such thing as the iron curtain, which would eventually lead to the YCLs strong commitment to the anti-imperialist struggle. And we can see this in their actions against the war in Vietnam, as they got involved all across the country.

There was a brief period in the 60s where the YCL was disorganized and an eventual collapse occurred. By the 70s the YCL was re-founded, and continued to focus on building the peace and solidarity movement. In the 1980s, the YCL was involved in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and in solidarity with Palestine. We were also involved with movements against the neoliberal agenda and free trade agreements.

In the late 80s the YCL focused on producing a newspaper, Rebel Youth, which gained a certain amount of success, and launched a campaign unifying Canada’s youth around the demand for a Charter of Youth Rights. In 1990, the YCL was liquidated a result of opportunist views that saw the liquidation of the Communist Youth as a path towards the liquidation of the Communist Party and the communist movement as a whole in Canada.

In 2007 the YCL-LJC was re-founded, and ten years after its re-foundation, the YCL-LJC’s activity has contributed to strengthen the communist movement in Canada. It also contributed to strengthening progressive movements such as the student movement, the feminist, anti-racist, peace and anti-imperialist movements. Since the re-founding of the YCL-LJC, our organisation has known a steady growth, showing that even in Canada, from the ‘belly of the beast’, there is a place for a communist youth organisation.

Although our strength is far from the one we could count on at a certain stage of our history, we know for a fact that the youth is an important factor for social change. No revolution nor social struggle can happen without the active support of the younger generation. This is why, in these difficult times where the danger of a 3rd World War is not a simple rhetorical threat, where the rise of ultra-right organisations and the trivialization of their speech are a reminiscence of the darkest times of the past century, we need, now more than ever, convince our generation that it is now time to organise, unite and fight for a new world, a world free of wars, exploitation and crisis, a socialist world.

YCL LJC - Canada



100 YEARS OF NOVEMBER REVOLUTION

War and misery

After the initial nationalist euphoria to the opening of the great war by a large part of the population, the reality of the war led to an increasingly dissatisfaction. The effects of World War I hit the population hard. Millions of soldiers fell on the battlefields. The supply of people with food and other essential goods (such as fuel) was very bad. The food rations were reduced further and further. The prices of food and clothing, however, rose to astronomical heights. Hunger created many epidemics, alone 1918 nearly 460,000 people died of flu, tuberculosis and pneumonia. In contrast, war production continued to run at full speed: German capital earned huge sums of money and gained gigantic profits.



Strikes and uprisings from 1918

At the beginning of 1918, after the “contagious” example of the successful Russian revolution, the anger of the people about the losses on the battlefields and the growing misery in the homeland rapidly increased and created more and more indignation. The start of the revolution was a strike of over a million Workers from January 28 to February 4, 1918, that demanded immediate peace and the overthrow of the emperor. These demands - peace and overthrow of the emperor - mobilized millions. The emperor, army leadership and big industry were scared by the big demonstrations and strikes. Above all, leading representatives of the bourgeoisie began to fear that a revolution could not only disempower the aristocracy but assume a socialist character.

In the summer of 1918, the German armies in the west opened a large-scale offensive. The attack got stuck after a few days and ended in a lossy defeat. At the end of September 1918, the western front collapsed completely, and the German army began to fall apart. This situation forced the military leadership to confess to their utter defeat and readiness to negotiate a cease-fire. The World War approached its end.

The “revolution from above”

Caused by the military collapse and the increasing strikes and demonstrations, the German bourgeois leadership came under pressure. They tried to find a way to deceive the people by fulfilling some of their demands but without losing power. German industrialists, such as Stinnes, Krupp or Duisberg, forced the emperor to nominate the liberal Max von Baden as chancellor of the Reich. He should form a government with the participation of the social democratic SPD to capture the protests. Social Democrats known as “loyal to the kaiser” such as Philipp Scheidemann and Friedrich Ebert were integrated in the government.

The refusal to realize the demands for the emperor’s abdication and the immediate end of the war led to a further radicalization of the protests. At the same time, soldiers on the eastern front began to desert and join forces with Red Army soldiers.

The “Spartacist Group”, in which the left-wing SPD opposition had organized itself under the leadership of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, took account of this development at its congress in October 1918. They approved a program for the People’s Revolution calling for the immediate end of the war, the revolutionary conquest of democratic rights and freedom, and the overthrow of the ruling imperial-capitalist system.

Outbreak and course of the revolution

The situation turned violently on 3 November 1918 by the armed sailor uprising in Kiel. 80,000 sailors refused the commands. The spark of the revolution spread at all over Germany. The revolutionary wave soon hit Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, Wilhelmshaven, Cuxhaven, Rostock and other German cities. Workers 'and soldiers' councils were formed in countless cities within a short time. The workers of important armaments factories went into powerful strikes. In many places workers and soldiers violently broke the resistance of government-loyal troops. They stormed barracks and police stations, seized them and freed political prisoners from prisons.

The emperor had to flee into exile and within a short time the workers 'and soldiers' councils held political power in Germany in their hands. Although all councils called for the overthrow of the old capitalist system, they lacked a clear line and unified leadership. The SPD leadership had a strong influence on the councils, which managed to put themselves at the leadership of the revolution they did not want. Most of the workers and soldiers in the councils were Social Democrats and continued to trust the SPD leadership. And legitimated a government of SPD and USPD members led by the right winged Friedrich Ebert.

Founding of the KPD and suppression of the revolution

The Stinnes-Legien-Agreement and the establishment of the Transitional Government, which was effectively controlled by right-wing social democrats, laid the foundation for containing the November Revolution. At the same time, the revolutionary sections of social democracy were organizing. Out of the Spartacist group the KPD was founded on January 1st, 1919. The newly formed party quickly gained influence in the councils and formed alliances with representatives of the USPD, who looked with concern at the alliance between the SPD leadership and the ultra-reactionary Reichswehr-leadership. Although the SPD remained the leading force in the workers' movement, it came under increasing pressure due to the work of the KPD.

The prelude to the violent escalation of the conflict between the SPD and the KPD was the deposition of the Berlin police chief Eichhorn on January 4, 1919, who was a leftist representative of the USPD. In response, the KPD and USPD called for the protection of the revolution. On January 6th there was a general strike in Berlin, which was followed by hundreds of thousands of people throughout Germany.

The Ebert government reacted to these protests with extreme brutality. On January 8, 1919, Freikorps (irregular reactionary armed forces) units led by Gustav Noske (a social democrat who called himself Ebert's "Bloodhound") began the systematic terrorization and murder of striking workers and leading Communists. In consultation with the SPD leadership these troops captured and shot Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg on 15 January.



Achievements and Lessons of the November Revolution

The November Revolution was a bourgeois revolution, largely carried out with proletarian means, in which the proletariat played the most important role. The revolution was doomed to collapse because of the division of the working class and the too late organization of the revolutionary forces in the KPD. Neither the destruction of capitalism nor the complete overthrow of the nobility could be achieved. Nevertheless, the revolutionary movement and the Weimar Republic that emerged from it enabled the working-class movement to achieve many important achievements. The 8-hour working day, the right to strike and assembly, women's suffrage, social insurance, the acceptance of trade unions, the introduction of collective agreements and the right to found workers councils in the companies were all results of the November Revolution. In the education system, the preschools were abolished - private schools where children of rich parents were prepared for high school. It also introduced the right to free education and compulsory school attendance for every child.

The revolution terrified the bourgeois and aristocratic rulers of Germany so much that they forced themselves to make concessions to prevent socialism. All these achievements, however, were an eyesore for German capital right from the start. The right to strike and the 8-hour day are examples of accomplishments that still exist today and are fought by the capitalist until today. Defending and expanding these rights is one of our most important tasks.

The failed revolution shows how quickly class consciousness can change. Within a few years, the German population turned from warlike enthusiasm to a radical rejection of the monarchy and even a majority agreed on the destruction of capitalism. But it also shows how important in a revolutionary situation is a consistent revolutionary party that takes over the leadership of the movement. A better organized and class-based KPD could have convinced the workers 'and soldiers' councils on a socialist course much earlier and possibly prevented betrayal by the SPD leadership.

28TH OF MARCH

NATIONAL AND WORLD YOUTH DAY

Two months after the end of World War II and the defeat of the Nazi-fascist beast, the World Youth Conference was to be held in London, which was to form the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY).

With its founding, the organizations that made it and that represented millions of young people from dozens of countries, committed themselves to the struggle for peace and the eradication of any trace of Nazi-fascism from the face of the earth, as well as the commitment of the union of the antifascist, progressive and anti-imperialist youth all over the world.

From its first decisions comes the adoption of 28 March as World Youth Day, a day of celebration, of protest and of youth unity around the world for peace and progress.

The Portuguese youth from early on assumed its role. Indeed, in 1947, and aware of the harsh situation imposed by fascism in Portugal, the Movement for Democratic Youth Unit (MUD Juvenil) decided to organize a camp in the south of the country to demand peace, freedom and democracy.

The response of the fascist repressive forces makes evident the harshness of the historical context: machine gun bursts over the hundreds of participants in the camp, detentions and the arrest of the leaders of that movement, making this day a milestone for the youth struggle in Portugal for better living conditions. Also for this reason, this day has never ceased to be remembered and celebrated. Since then, the 28th of March has taken on its national dimension and would also be consecrated as the National Youth Day.

Given the continuity and intensification of the struggle and the growing politicization of the youth masses, MUD Juvenil was declared illegal in 1957. However, even then the youth did not stop participating and directing processes of struggle in unity around specific demands. The struggles in schools and universities, in the fields and factories, of youth and the people, gave rise to the revolution of April, which would consecrate important achievements for the youth.

Despite the end of the fascist dictatorship, colonial war and repression, the struggle of youth continued after the revolution of April, for more and better advances in their living and working conditions, and culminating in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, where still consecrated many of the youth's rights remain.

However, the governments that followed took on a position of reckoning with the achievements of the April revolution and against which the youth did not fail to assume its role.

It is in this context that Interjovem is created, a specific organization of the young workers of the CGTP-IN, a trade union center of class and unitary, in 1989. With the growth of precariousness, low wages, deregulation of schedules, unemployment, forced emigration; the youth takes the step of holding a demonstration on the 28th of March. Given its success, it would be repeated thereafter and in that way marking that historical day, not seeing it as a struggle to meet the calendar, but a date to celebrate the struggle of the past, to struggle for the improvement of living conditions in the present, and to gain new and redoubled strength for the struggle that will come in the future.

In its preparation and discussion dozens of young people are involved. Meetings of young workers are held in trade unions, in work centers, or in cafes. Contacts are made at the door of the workplace, talking about concrete workplace problems, or problems affecting the youth as a whole. In plenary sessions within the company and during work time, concrete demands are discussed - wage increases, the fight against precariousness, the end of the labor regulations, the reduction and regulation of working hours - and strikes are scheduled and the way in which the participation in the demonstration is going to be. Banners and posters are put up in front of companies and youth gathering places. Mobilization propaganda is distributed to thousands of young people throughout the country. Buses are organized that come from all over the country. In this context, new cadres emerge and others stand out, organizations are reinforced as well as the struggle to come.

While it is true that there are concrete and specific reasons to struggle in unity with others, it is also true that there are general reasons that unite the youth: precariousness has escalated to unprecedented levels: seven out of ten new contracts are precarious; the minimum wage is increasingly assumed as the rule and not as the exception; the hours are deregulated and do not allow the reconciliation of personal and family life; the price of housing is increasingly unbearable for the overwhelming majority of youth; leaving your parents' home or starting a family is a reality delayed for ever later.

This scenario is the result of four decades of attacks on the rights conquered with the April Revolution, and that had particular incidence during the government of Passos Coelho. During this period, youth raised the level of the struggle against the national and foreign troika, with the PS, PSD and CDS, in collusion with the ECB, the EU and the IMF to attack the rights of young people in particular, and the people in general, while privatizing key sectors of the economy, destroying public services and channeling important resources of the country to serve the interests of big capital.

Young people were actively involved in the struggles against that government not only in youth demonstrations, but also at the front line in the struggles in their workplaces, often under heavy repression and blackmail, as well as in the many demonstrations and great general strikes that stopped the country.

During that period, more than half a million young people were forced to emigrate for not finding work or for not having the conditions to live with dignity. Unemployment was present in the overwhelming majority of families. The real value of wages came down abruptly. The profits of the big companies, these, increased.

Not always with immediate results, the youth struggle proved essential to isolate and then defeat the policy practiced until then in the October 2015 legislative elections, which initiated a new phase of the national political life, without illusions about its limitations and with the awareness that struggle is the determining factor to advance with the reinstatement and conquest of rights. In fact, the struggle has brought about important advances: the recovery of 4 holidays, successive increases in the national minimum wage - even if it is far from necessary and possible - tax changes that have a direct effect on raising wages by reducing taxes, free school textbooks in compulsory schooling, reduction of tuition fees, increase of family allowances.

In companies and workplaces, in public services, in call centers and in factories, hundreds of young workers have seen their work relationship regularized, following the established policy that to each permanent job has to be an effective contract. Today there is trade union organization and influence in many large call centers, where precariousness, low wages and repression find the resistance and the strength of the struggle of the young workers who work there, demonstrating not only that the youth struggles, but also that it is possible to fight and win even in the toughest conditions.

In the new phase of national political life, the youth knows that it is through the struggle that it can succeed and it does not back away. The commemorations of the 28th of March have brought to the street every year more and more young people from all over the country and have taken on an important role in clarifying, acting and mobilizing more young people to fight and to advance in the recovery, restoration and conquest of rights.

INTERESTS OF THE RUSSIAN YOUTH AND OF THE CURRENT CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT ARE INCOMPATIBLE!



One of the most distinct differences between the essence of the state structure of the Soviet society and of the current one is the attitude towards young people. In the Soviet Union, the youth acted as the main value of society. Development of the personality of the young person was put in the first place, and the emphasis was on self-organization, self-realization and self-expression. Quality education, opportunity to find a job you like, to express oneself, to fend for oneself and one's family – were the reality of a socialist state. Even the most hardcore anti-communists admit that all social lifts worked properly in the USSR.

What do we have now? The coup d'état, prepared and carried out by Gorbachev and Yeltsin, the development of peripheral speculative comprador capitalism led to the fact that young people objectively became one of the socially vulnerable groups of the population. And the government recalls the youth, by and large, only during the election campaigns.

According to a survey conducted in 2016, two thirds of young people surveyed believe that today it is difficult for young people to succeed in life, to find fulfillment, first of all, because of unemployment, poverty and corruption.

The most important problems of modern Russian youth are unemployment and difficulties with finding job according to one's education; limited access to quality education; inability to purchase housing for the vast majority of young people; drug addiction and alcoholism, which became epidemics. All these problems are systemic in nature, and their resolution in the existing socioeconomic realities is impossible.

According to Russian Federal State Statistics Service, among the unemployed in March 2017, young people up to 25 years old accounted for 18.7%, and the persons without work any experience - 23.8%. And today, when more and more businesses and organizations are closing down or suspending work, the chances of young people for decent employment are further reduced.

For most of them, stable work, creating the basis for well-being for years to come, remains an impossible dream. Only about 20% of university graduates find work in their field. Most young people get a job on the basis of short-term contracts. Over 45% of them do not stay at the workplace for even one year.

The planned destruction of secondary, higher and vocational education does not allow young people to receive a quality education. Moreover, it is becoming less accessible. About 575 thousand budget-paid seats in the country's universities are planned for 2018. This is the total number of places for all specialities and forms of education. According to estimates, for every hundred high school graduates there will be only about 57 budget seats.



The problem of providing young families with their own housing is almost insoluble. Mortgage in most cases is not available for young people. At the same time, according to various estimates, out of 10 million young families, every second one needs to improve housing conditions.

Bourgeois Russian power continues its offensive against the last social gains of the Soviet period. The government has undertaken a reform that provides for a gradual increase in the retirement age. Now in the Russian Federation, women will retire at the age of 60 (instead of 55), and men at 65 (instead of 60). According to the initiators, this measure should save budget funds, because the state is not able to feed the citizens who have given their whole lives to their motherland.

Setting the boundary of the retirement age at the level of the average life expectancy will automatically lead to the fact that the number of taxpayers will increase, and the number of beneficiaries of pensions will be reduced several times. At the same time, the consequences of raising the retirement age will have the most negative impact not on current pensioners, and not even on people of pre-retirement age, but on young people, who are just beginning their career paths.

As a result of the reform, young people will be deprived of the last reasons for official employment. This measure will have catastrophic consequences: unemployment among young people will increase due to the fact that millions of jobs will not be released, there will be a considerable stratum of people who have neither pensions, nor jobs, since finding a job after the age of 45 and is very difficult even now.

Such a situation would be impossible in a socialist state, but it is a reality for modern capitalist Russia. By all means trying to preserve the existing socio-economic structure, the bourgeois government once again prefers to solve its own problems at the expense of the most vulnerable segments of the population. Instead of developing the productive forces, nationalizing the heavy and extractive industries, and evenly distributing public funds in the interests of all citizens, the Russian government is again dancing to the tune of big business, pushing through unpopular reforms.

Of course, the Leninist Communist Youth Union of the Russian Federation (LCYU) as a youth organization of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation became actively involved in the struggle against pension reform, having managed to lead the protests of young people not only in the capital and in large cities, but also in rural areas.

In today's difficult situation, the youth policy of the government and the ruling party is limited to holding various forums and concerts. In the USSR, the Komsomol took an active part not only in the affairs of the youth, but also in the country as a whole, and actively influenced the entire social environment. Now, the role of pro-government youth organizations, who possess colossal financial resources, is insignificant, both in the life of the youth itself and in the society in general.

In comparison with them, the projects of LCYU of the Russian Federation, the youth organization of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, have a more distinct and socially significant sound for young people. These are, first of all, such projects as the revival of the system of youth housing cooperatives and support for student construction teams.

Therefore, today, an increasing number of our fellow citizens, including young people, are becoming aware that the interests of the Russian youth and the policies of the current capitalist government are incompatible.

LCYU – Russian Federation



THE RISE OF REPRESSION AGAINST POPULAR MOVEMENTS IN SPAIN

Political repression has been continually held against communist, antifascists and anticapitalistic militants, and supporters of democracy in general, during the whole history of Spain. Here, communist faced almost 40 years of dictatorship. During these years, prosecution, exile, censorship, and murder pervaded the militant activity. The so-called “political transition” brought the Spanish Constitution of 1978, accompanied by the “social, democratic and lawful” state. This Constitution acknowledged ideological freedom and freedom of speech as the foundational principles of democratic and free societies.

Since then, one single discourse dominates society, spread through education, advertising, media and, in essence, the ideological apparatuses of the state. This discourse states that we live in a country with full democratic guarantees, without censorship, without prosecution, without torture, and without repression. Nevertheless, the European Court of Human Rights does not support these conclusions. Spain has been sentenced by the Strasbourg Court because of many infringements of the European Convention on Human Rights, among which there are violations of the fundamental right to freedom of speech, the right to a fair trial and the practice of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (torture). Several of these sentences have been delivered during the last years, but are related to facts that happened some years ago. Therefore, within the next years, the Court will expectably deliver more convictions, since repression has been intensified during the last years. The ruling class strengthens his attacks on the ruled class in order to protect his interests.

After May 15th, while consciousness and political debate –dormant during a long period– started to occupy the streets and squares, the state initiated the preparation to counteract the rising political dissent against the Regime of '78. Then, the government amended the Criminal Code and created new precepts in order to legally prosecute the exercise of political participation and opinion. Furthermore, the Criminal Code still contains obsolete precepts as the offence of slander against the Crown. In 2015, the government passes the Law on Public Safety (Ley de Seguridad Ciudadana), which is dubbed as the “Gag Law”. This Gag Law, nowadays, represents the epitome of the repressive rule of Spain, aimed at controlling, silencing and repressing the popular expressions through economic violence. Its aim is to deter protest through the threat of very high fines in a country where poverty and precariousness spread through the working class. This Law works using open-ended sentences as “disturbing public safety”, so almost any kind of conduct could be subsumed into it. Thus, it allows the government to punish any action, creating a framework where the guarantees of the citizens almost disappear, and the declaration of the police officers are considered as truth.



Therefore, the government acts as if it were the court. Plenty of legitimate popular protests is the object of prosecution through this Law.

It is important to underscore that during the last months plenty of criminal processes have been initiated against different artist, singers, rappers, twitterers, comedians and cartoonists. All of their artistic expressions have in common the critique of the Crown, the Regimen of '78 and the capitalist system in general. On the contrary, those who promote hate speech, inciting violence against other people on the basis of national or ethnic origin, race, ascendancy, disability, language, religion or believes, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and so on; or those who develop apologia of fascism, they are tolerated, normalized and they even take part of the repressive apparatuses of the state, such as police or judicial power.

The independence movement developed in Catalonia, which has brought to light the historical territorial problem and the plurinational question of Spain, has shown the darkest side of the repression of the State. The Spanish government, the public power and the State as such have shown their incapacity and their non-existent will to solve internal conflicts through democratic means – not even their own bourgeois democratic means – and have opted for totalitarian means, recalling the Spanish people the days of the military dictatorship.

The state, carrying out its task as a tool of domination of the oligarchic block, deployed its entire repressive means during the day of the consultation in Catalonia. National police and Spanish military police were sent to take away the ballot boxes, close the polling stations and beat Catalans, which were peacefully exercising their democratic right to freedom of expression. These deeds have led to the imprisonment of many politicians who defend independentism, on the accusation of having called a referendum considered illegal, so acting seditiously and on rebellion. The incarceration based on political reasons is another means of repression disguised under the ideal of the rule of law.

Repression in Spain is being practised through different means, as physical, psychological, social or economic violence. The degree of hegemony of the systems determines the kind of violence the State draws upon, or acting in a more or less overt way.

The normalization of repression and the false bourgeois democratic and individualistic discourse enhances social repression, turning anti-repressive causes and campaigns into marginal struggles.

In this framework, the Communist Youth, conjointly with communists, antifascists, anticapitalists and social activists all around the world struggles against political repression in our countries. We must reinforce our strength, in light of the worldwide rise of fascism and authoritarianism. We must build up our juridical tools, our propaganda, our resistance, and our resolve. Otherwise, we will not be able to face the rising menace of the bourgeois state and its proxies during these years of developing class struggle.

UJCE - Spain



YOUTH UNDER THE BURDEN OF THE CAPITALIST CRISIS IN TURKEY

Turkish capitalism is characterized by a complete dependence that offers all the wealth provided by nature and labor to a relentless exploitation for the sake of imperialists and local capitalists. Encouraged by the arbitrary acts of the brazen bourgeois class in Turkey, once this dependence eventually gave place to a long-awaited economic crisis, the government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) intensified its anti-people efforts against toiling masses.

Since the crisis concerns the system as a whole, a capitalist crisis can never be limited within the economic sphere but also triggers changes within the political sphere. Leave aside the well-acquainted context of governmental repression, the only point that bourgeois opposition raises on this issue is the “wrong choices in diplomacy” due to their excessive attention to exclude any reference to class struggles. If separated from politics and the general situation of class struggles, discussions on freedom of expression and libertarian atmosphere in universities and schools serve nothing but an illusion. In this text, if we are to analyze the impact of the crisis on the youth, we must treat the circumstances that the youth in Turkey has within the framework of the ongoing class struggles.

Thanks to the social triumphs of the working class, especially in Europe, and the unquestionable inspiration of the Soviet Union, peoples living in capitalist countries recognized a relative period of “prosperity” in the second part of the 20th century. Turkey also benefited from this context and the emerging class and youth movements further advanced it with their struggles. Until recently, the limited number of universities and the privileged social status of university students used to provide them a relative autonomy from the proletariat. Considered an “outsider” in class struggles, political intervention of the students used to be justified with the slogan “an educated person shall be accountable to his/her own people.”

Nevertheless, the neoliberal attack, launched with the military coup of 1980 and having reached its unattended stages by the AKP government, totally overwhelmed the conditions of the toiling masses in Turkey. The course of the past few years, accompanied by worsening social welfare conditions, has obliged students to directly engage in the relations of production; thus, they lost their former autonomous position and became directly involved in the working class movement. Today, given the worsening economic situation and the advancing integration between academia and capitalist companies, more and more students have to work in order to continue their education. We do not have the exact number of students who are currently working since youth generally work unregistered and majority of them are working at part-time jobs for less than the minimum wage.

Insufficient scholarships, insufficient and expensive housing alternatives and the general burden of the cost of living are the main factors that force the students to work in order to earn their living and continue their education. It should not be surprising to hear that economic crisis accelerated the liquidation of the already insufficient services and aggravated the problems of the student youth. While inflation scored this year more than 20%, President Erdoğan declared as a paternalistic charity that they will make a 5% increase in student credits which require repayment after graduation. Youth are forced to develop their own methods to survive in city centers. For instance, standard apartments in districts surrounding university campuses receive each year more and more -in some cases more than a dozen- tenants, making it impossible for these students to study or have a rest at all. No matter where and how they live, even though they join the ranks of the working class, student workers have to devote their energy to university and work at the same time.

Recent years witnessed the systematic degradation and decomposition of universities by the reactionary government enjoying the vital cooperation of capitalist interventions and liberal illusions in campuses. Leave aside political activities, even students' clubs trying to do cultural and scientific work are suffering from arbi-



trary bureaucratic restrictions. It is obvious that these restrictions are centrally coordinated within the framework of the government's aim to totally liquidate the cultural life at universities for eliminating the emergence of a possible political dynamic at campuses. On the other hand, posts of progressive elements are replaced by religious fundamentalist cadres in academia and commercial activities of private companies that promote careerism among students. Unfortunately, due to the relentless political repression, most of the progressive academics and students are trying to leave the country in the hope for acquiring abroad better economic and cultural conditions and eventually a relatively better life and a predictable future. And this tendency to leave the country in the hands of the fundamentalists has become a very dangerous threat for our struggle, for it relies on a so desperate psychology that it annihilates any hope or motivation for political struggle.

Now, the crisis has become a pretext for the government to cancel public funds reserved for traditionally progressive university institutions. Beneath the destructive intentions of the governments, there lies old plans for leaving the university campuses in city centers to the mercy of capitalist enterprises and religious sects. Despite this negative atmosphere, students have not ceased yet to undertake spontaneous mobilizations against the ferocious attacks of the government and capitalists. This year, in spring, we experienced a mobilization against the preparation of a law for dividing traditional faculties of Istanbul University that would eventually move the university away from its historical location. The project for privatizing traditional universities and gentrifying their surroundings is not a recent project in Turkey. Still, we must confess that students and academics in Istanbul University led a brave struggle for defending their university against the destructive intentions of the government and capitalists. After the protests, the movement gained momentum with solidarity events from dozens of universities all around Turkey and became a prominent issue in Turkey that was occupying an important place even in the mainstream media. Although we could not avoid the legislation of the law for dividing the university, we gained a very precious experience in a big-scale mobilization that continued for weeks. 2 months before the elections, university students gave a very important message to the government.



This summer, in a few weeks after the elections, Turkey was drawn into a serious economic crisis. In fact, the high fragility of the Turkish economy was not a secret since our country had already become the playground of international monopolies, companies and banks as a result of the liberal economic policies that have been pursued for years. During the crisis, probably nothing will happen to the capitalists even if the weak ones may withdraw from some fields and shrink, laying the debt and damage on the state, thus on the people. Now we have to develop a line of struggle against unemployment and high cost of living by underlining the labour culture, resistance and solidarity. We are calling upon the people to stand up against poverty and unemployment by getting organized everywhere against wage cuts, against the extension of working hours, against layoffs and to revive the culture of solidarity.

Apart from students, most of the youth do not continue their studies but work. For young people with limited work experience, internship has become the most horrible way of exploitation, preventing them from any right and generally even from a mere payment. The cancellation of the internship becomes the biggest threat for them, which incites them to accept working in the least humanitarian conditions and despite the most irritating acts of mobbing. We must mention here that vocational schools in Turkey are abandoned to the mercy of capitalists who enjoy the free exploitation of young students that they justify within the framework of internship or practical courses. Meanwhile, child labor has also become an undeniable fact in our country, especially after the arrival of millions of refugees who fled from the imperialist aggression in the Middle East.

Under these circumstances, the fact that the interests of the youth go hand in hand with the interests of the working class is the main idea that shapes the work of the Communist Youth of Turkey (TKG). We are trying to organize young workers suffering from the harsh atmosphere of the crisis by discussing with them the ways for strengthening their resistance in their workplaces and for recruiting an atmosphere of solidarity between young workers against this inhumane social order. Youth do not show difficulty in stating that their struggles do not concern only them but are directly related with the inequalities of the capitalist-imperialist system. Once joined the ranks of the working class, it becomes easier for a young person to see that the rapidly worsening conditions of our lives are stemming from the anti-people decisions and acts of the current reactionary government that serves the greedy bourgeoisie and bloody imperialist powers. It is a necessity to bring down this order all together with its local defenders, which promises nothing but crisis, poverty and war to the humanity.

MOMENTS FROM THE FESTIVAL OF KNE

100 YEARS OF KKE

50 YEARS OF KNE





SOLIDARITY BRIGADE

From 29 to 31 October, WFDY, through 20 of its member organizations, joined together with the World Peace Council, a solidarity brigade with the Syrian people.

This brigade was present in various initiatives with representatives of the House of the People, trade unions and other members of the Syrian republic government, knowing in detail the difficulties, victories and achievements of the Syrian people in recent years. We underline the conference with hundreds of university students which took place at the University of Damascus where various organizations had the opportunity to express solidarity and talk about the actions they have held in their countries in the struggle for peace and respect for the sovereignty of peoples worldwide, and specially with Syria.

Imperialism has not stopped attacking this country and its people but the great unity of the Syrians has allowed and continues to allow them not to suffer defeats and advance in this difficult period against one of the most powerful enemies. An aggression that stretches for several years, not only from weapons but also from economic and diplomatic blockades. The Syrian people demonstrate that a people that resists is a people that wins and that will win in the end. A heroic struggle that was exemplified by the solidarity that was felt throughout the Brigade's moments.

To WFDY member organizations that were present and to WFDY it lays now the responsibility that in their countries and with the youth they develop actions to raise awareness and deepen the struggle for Peace and the sovereignty of peoples, for the right to self-determination.







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