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A Call for Catalonia

# Let us support the struggle of the Catalan people

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**After the referendum held on 1 October in Catalonia and the victory of Yes in favour of the independence of Catalonia, despite the great legal, judicial and police difficulties imposed by the government of the Popular Party, there has been the strike (mainly followed in the administrations, transport and rural areas) and a national stoppage (with lockouts in small and medium-sized enterprises in protest against repression) by other layers of the population on 3 October. The first result is a victory of the popular movement and a defeat of the Rajoy government that could not prevent these two great expressions of the movement.**

A rebellion has begun with massive social support within the European Union itself. This strengthens the possibilities of moving towards the Catalan Republic, a goal that requires the greatest degree of popular self-organization and the development of a constitutional process capable of stopping the counterrevolution announced by King Felipe VI's speech on 3 October.

## **Political victory of the referendum, the State locks itself into repression**

The admirable determination of a very large segment of the Catalan population, which managed to resist peacefully, brought the strategy of the 1978 regime to a major political defeat in Catalonia in the eyes of the rest of the world. This was a blow, not only for Rajoy's Popular Party, but also for the stability of the Spanish monarchy and its main agents since the reform of the Franco regime that was called transition. The structure of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), the right-wing Citizens Party (Ciudadanos), the military, repressive and media state apparatus, as well as the actual powers of big capital, constitute a power bloc that cannot be reformed.

The monarch Felipe VI as Head of State and Rajoy, his government and corrupt party, with the support of PSOE and Ciudadanos and the mainstream media have begun a campaign of slander, lies and smearing of the Catalan popular movement. There is no need to despise this; it is a factor of indoctrination of the popular classes of the Spanish State (and of the European Union) to set them against the Catalan people and to cow them with the excuse of the "unity of the Spanish nation". The objective of this power bloc is to justify in the eyes of the people of the Spanish State, and at an international level, new and greater repressive measures that may lead to the arrest of Catalan social and political leaders, the closing or muzzling of the few media not yet brought into line, the suspension of the Catalan institutions and the prolongation of the presence of police and military forces controlled by the Spanish government in Catalan territory.

## **Catalan republic and constituent process**

A faltering institutional rupture has begun, which is sure to radicalize under the repressive coups of the state. It is difficult to predict the rhythms and formulas that it will eventually adopt, but confrontation is inevitable. Two elements are key: to strive to maintain as non-violent a strategy as possible, avoiding provocations, in order not to give any pretext to the Spanish state government for triggering even more severe repression and splitting the movement, for which they are more than ready to seize the chance; and to work to develop resistance to repression both within the labour movement in Catalonia itself and through a broad anti-repressive, democratic alliance for freedoms in the whole of the Spanish State, as well as the broadest possible solidarity internationally.

## **From double legitimacy to a momentary double power**

Since 6 and 7 September there are two opposing legitimacies and legal orders. The gap between them can only expand irreversibly. The lack of clarity, firmness and decision of a large part of the left can only give support to the counterrevolution and obstruct the left turn of the republican movement in Catalonia. The left who identify with socialism and the labour movement have the duty, both in Catalonia and Spain to take their responsibilities. The challenge they face is to promote a process that deepens the democratic rupture throughout the State, bearing in mind that the situation and the rhythms are different in Catalonia to the rest of the Spanish State. In Catalonia they will have to fight for the political leadership of this incipient rebellion, placing social, democratic, environmental and emancipatory questions at the centre of the constituent debate that will open in the coming weeks. That will have to be done, we hope as soon as possible, in the rest of the Spanish state. It is also the duty of the left and the labour movement internationally to organize broad campaigns supporting the Catalan movement and denouncing the campaign waged against it by the ruling class and its media.

## **General strike, self-organization and going beyond**

Active participation of the working class as the main actor is essential at this crossroads to ensure a process that is favourable to popular interests. The possibility of pushing the struggle of the working class with its own agenda and thus achieving a new anti-capitalist social hegemony depends on the capacity of the workers' movement to act politically in relation to the rest of the social classes to solve a great national question, breaking with corporatism and passive economism. We must work hard in a forced march close the gap between what is necessary and what is possible.

The mass mobilization that we saw on 3 October with the general strike that paralysed Catalonia is laying the foundations of a growing irruption of the organized labour movement in the political process and of the generalization of dynamics of self-organization in the neighbourhoods (the Committees for Defence of the Referendum that now seem to be converted into Committees of Defence of the Republic), the localities and in some workplaces. The social base of the movement has massified; the nationalist parties, the Catalan National Assembly and Omnium Cultural, which until last month had exclusively led the "independence process", are seeing the rise of more dynamic, worker and radical sectors.

## **Democracy and the 1978 regime are already incompatible: we must open a second front**

The current crisis is not only a Catalan rebellion, it is also a state crisis in which the, for the moment, minority consistent left (fundamentally our Anticapitalistas comrades and significant currents of the left union, social movements, Podemos and parties for change, as well as leftist nationalist currents), and the far right have begun a race against time for occupying the street. It is likely that in the short term, in the rest of the Spanish State, the forces that will benefit most from the crisis are the latter. Hence the urgency for the emerging left to be able to open a second front to relieve repressive pressure on Catalonia by taking initiatives against repression and by breaking with the 1978 regime. The nature of the power bloc that controls it forces a confrontation to effectively defend freedoms and a perspective of destitution / constitution.

There is a historical bifurcation between respect for the legality and respect and deepening of democracy.

Conciliatory attitudes and abstract appeals to dialogue are having little real resonance among both political actors and citizens. It is necessary to articulate a joint action of the lefts and the Catalan popular movement to achieve the democratic objectives and for the repression.

## **Unilateralism and solidarity, indispensable requirements for victory**

The so-called “unilateralism” of the Catalan referendum is not incompatible with the search for solidarity and synergies with democratic and popular forces throughout the Spanish state and internationally. In this sense, it is increasingly evident that self-determination in Catalonia will be stifled without constitutional rupture(s) in the whole of the Spanish State and that there is no possible regime change in the state without a democratic and fraternal solution to Catalan aspirations.

## **Create two, three, many Catalonias**

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Che Guevara, an example of a revolutionary with an internationalist vision, it is appropriate to be aware that it is more than time to break the reactionary dialectic that drags on Europe and the world and affects all regions of the planet. Institutional scourging in Latin America, racist and Islamophobic populism in Europe and the United States, fascist jihadism in the Middle East ... threaten the entire world and are reminiscent of the geopolitical chaos of earlier times.

That is why it is fundamental to support the Catalan process insofar as it is the most impressive example of mass civil disobedience of the last decades and constitutes a true laboratory for the 21st century citizen revolutions that could contribute to breaking the spiral towards barbarism in which the decadence of the world capitalist system has trapped us. At a time when workers and popular classes are suffering hard attacks driven by capitalists throughout the European Union, with deep attacks against democratic rights, the rebellion by the people of Catalonia is a sign of hope for regaining confidence in collective action of the oppressed and exploited.

It is more than a mere historical anecdote that the Catalan independence flag is directly inspired by the flag of the Cuban revolutionaries who defeated the Spanish colonial army on the island in the late 19th century, a defeat that would decisively contribute to the ruin of the first Bourbon restoration. The struggle in Catalonia has certainly hurt the second and a republican victory would allow us to imagine a new rise of the popular movement and an update of the anti-capitalist and eco-socialist perspective in Catalonia, the Spanish state and throughout Europe.

## **Solidarity and mobilization**

We call on all workers', popular and democratic organizations to support the struggle in Catalonia, to denounce the repression of the Spanish State, to pressure their respective states to recognize the act of sovereignty that is taking place and recognize an eventual proclamation of the Catalan Republic or Declaration of Independence

Towards the Catalan Republic. For popular self-organization and the initiation of a constituent democratic process

*Executive Bureau of the Fourth International*

4 October 2017

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