

REVOLUTION or WAR #6

Journal of the International Group of the Communist Left (IGCL)
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Summary

Reflections and Balance-Sheet on the Working Class Struggle in France (Spring 2016)

IGCL Leaflet (May 21st 2016):

Towards an Extended and Generalized Strike in All Sectors of the Production?
Now is the Time!

International Situation

Communique after the Nice Attacks and the Military Coup in Turkey: Explosions of World
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Workers Struggles throughout the World

Debate within the Proletarian Camp

Correspondence on Unionism and the Working Class Struggle

On Class Consciousness

Internal Life of the IGCL

Balance of the General Meetings

Activities Report adopted by the General Meeting

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Content

(Our review is also available in French and Spanish)

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Call on Support

We thank our readers who understand and support our activity through written, material or financial contributions, as well as by other means. Publishing, printing and mailing costs of our review represent a large financial effort, given our limited resources.

The development towards decisive class conflicts, as well as our organization's overall activity (intervention in the class, and regroupment...), all this demands, among other things, an important financial effort on our part. We appeal to all readers interested in our work, and the analyses that we defend, to show their support by subscribing and by getting the word out about our review which is published in full version in English and French. We also publish a Spanish version with selected articles (any help for translations is also welcome).

Warning to the English readers :

Most of the articles of this issue have been translated from French by non English born comrades and they could not be corrected, nor verified, by a native English speaking comrade. Thus, beyond their possible "heavy" and difficult readability, if the reader finds any political confusion or mistake, we call him/her to refer to the French version.

Reflections and Balance-Sheet of the Spring 2016 Working Class Struggle in France

The working class struggle against the law called "El Khomri" which changes the legal conditions of the labour force in France has lasted 4 months, beginning March to July. Despite this, the law has been passed and the failure is obvious even though it just basically codifies the already existing conditions of work for the most part of the workers of this country and, at first, the young. As such, the conditions of exploitation of the labour force are just aligning with the rest of western Europe where the same kind of labour regulations have been passed some time ago. But beyond the attack at the economic level, it is the violence of the repression that left its mark to this movement. And thus even though the unions have kept the control on it, certainly with difficulty because the very strong workers' militancy, as clearly shows the fact that the mobilization remained trapped by the agenda, the rhythm, the timing imposed by the union "Days of action". Already, as such, the characteristics – violence of the capitalist ruling class and utilization of the state of emergency against the working class, relative working class' powerlessness and appearance of more militant and determined fractions of workers in front the state violence and its political forces – of this episode of the class confrontation in France express the new degree of the confrontation between the classes at the international scale. The level reached by the capitalist contradictions, crisis and war exerting an increased pressure on the whole capitalist ruling classes, constrains these one to attack more and more violently and frontally the conditions of exploitation of the labour force and to provoke the international proletariat.

The "rhythm" of this mobilization has been given by the 12 days of action organized by the unions. If there were relatively few strikers during these days, **a minority but important fraction** of the working class, gathering ten of thousand workers of any age and statutes, has attempted to find an alternative to the sabotage of any massive mobilization by the union tactic of days of action : by participating to the street demonstrations, often outside the union processions and slogans; and by opposing the violent repression, new in its form and content for ages, and the increased provocations of the police. We can point out four phases or moments of this struggle.

March

The announcement of the law in February did not provoke any "spontaneous" response nor any particular struggle in one sector. Beyond the on line petition launched by Left bourgeois militants preparing "Nuit debout" ["All Night

Up"¹], the unions set up their traditional tactic of days of action planed in advance and staggered over time which enables them to prevent any massive and united strike dynamic in the factories and workplaces under the argument of "preparing the fight back". Since the first March 9th demonstration, it is obvious that very numerous workers are reluctant to follow the unions. The number of strikers is fairly low even though the participation to the street demonstrations is important. At that moment, and during the whole month of March, the memory of the traditional union sabotage through days of action whose the CGT – main French union – has become the specialist during the previous massive mobilizations of 2003, 2007 and 2010 in particular, is in all minds. And even though there can be other motives as the "modern" conditions of exploitation (the managerial dictatorship in the workplaces for instance which makes more difficult and risky to participate to the strikes), the past experiences provoke an obvious hesitation to go on open struggle, on strike, in the production places.

In front of this workers' hesitation and the bourgeois device put in place – the division of work between the government and the union days of action –, there is no **concrete** orientation or slogan that the revolutionaries can really put forwards and their intervention cannot be but general with a more propaganda than agitation character. For our part, and after the Brussels bombings of March 22nd , we publish a leaflet that we distribute in the mobilization. In this one, we denounce the national union lauded again by the bourgeoisie and we precisely call the proletarians to struggle for the defence of their class interests as unique response to the bombings and the war². Given the reality of our militant forces (a single comrade can intervene in France), our intervention cannot be but limited. Beyond his participation to the street demonstrations, he attends to various open student assemblies in which we note that the concern for the "unlimited general strike" is present and shared by all as well as the mistrust towards the unions. And, at the same time, a

1 . For our English language reader, we can say that "Nuit debout" ("All Night Up") is the 2016 French version of the former Spanish "Indignados" and "Occupy" movements. We come back on it later in this article and also in the leaflet we reproduce in this issue of the journal. The name comes from the fact its initiators called for gathering at night on the Republic Place in Paris and hold a permanent assembly of debates.

2 . *New Attacks in Brussels : Capitalism is Misery and War ! No to Terrorism, No to Anti-Terrorism ! Only One Path : To Struggle against Misery and War for Destroying Capitalism (March 22nd 2016)*, (<http://igcl.org/New-Attacks-in-Brussels-Capitalism>).

great part of these assemblies – in particular the one of the faculty of Tolbiac – is composed of young "autonomous" and other "black-blocs" who only want to do battle to the police. And above all they openly display the rejection of any political debate or reflection as well as any political group, included the revolutionary ones.

April

April begins... March 31st: after the demonstration of that day, the first meeting of "Nuit debout" is held on the Republic Place in Paris – after having diffusing our journal and the leaflet during more than 4 hours in the demonstration (under an intense rain), our member cannot attend it. No doubt, this is a weakness of our part. Before "Nuit debout" was definitively established and defined on the "democratic and citizen" political basis, on an "Spanish indignados" kind of organization and on an orientation of support to the unions, an intervention could have – may be – freed a minority being in rupture with these orientations. The leaflet that we reproduce after this article provides other elements of criticism against "Nuit debout". During that period, this one is in the foreground and the media present the unions as being overcome. The street demonstrations remain massive and above all determined despite the growing repression under the pretext of the "black-blocs" rioters. Few workers join the one day strikes. As the same time, "Nuit debout" are set up in other cities, most of them with little success. Sometime – up to our knowledge –, included under the "Nuit debout" label, embryos of *coordinations* or "inter-sector general assemblies" ["AG interpro"] are constituted as it seems it has developed in the industrial and harbour region of Normandy (the cities of Le Havre and Rouen). Yet no dynamic of workers struggle affecting the production places appears during April even though the participation to the street demonstrations remains very important³. This forces the unions to plan other days of action.

For our part, besides the attendance to some assemblies of "Nuit debout" and other actions of "blockage of the economy" mainly led by student assemblies often in connection with the local unions SUD, we are looking for a point of rupture with the dynamic under way which could present a determined orientation of class struggle such as it could have been expressed in the "inter-sector general assemblies" [AG interpro] of 2010 for instance. So we find workers and political militants who had led this 2010 "AG interpro" around a nucleus of railway workers. Amongst these workers whom we meet then, there are also political members of *Matière et Révolution* (<http://www.matierevolution.fr/>), of *Robin Goodfellow* (<https://defensedumarxisme.wordpress.com/>)⁴ and the

3 . The expectation and the hope of a strike which would "block the economy" – the fetishism of the "general strike" is historically very strong in France – put forwards by the leftists and "radical" unionists, particularly within SUD but also now within the CGT, actually leads to wait for a paralysis of the economy by a corporation, in the transports or the energy sectors for instance, which would force the bourgeoisie to give up. Thus, at every massive but hesitant mobilization, the leftists exert the whole weight of the fight upon a corporation as the railway workers. By doing so, they maintain powerlessness and wait-and-see policy within the workers ranks.

4 . Both web sites have English pages

GARAP ([www.http://garap.org](http://www.garap.org)). We are all looking for a "class point of rupture" in the mobilization which can offer an alternative to the unions tactic of days of action supported by "Nuit debout". Except some discussions on the situation, these meetings do not come out onto any formation of a *struggle committee* which could present a perspective of struggle and represent this first "class rupture". Up to our knowledge, only amongst the revolutionary groups⁵, *Robin Goodfellow* publishes a statement, *Statement on the Social Movement of March-April 2016 – April 2016* (only in French) that, amongst other things, denounces "Nuit debout" and puts forwards the necessity for "a revolutionary, communist, party capable of unifying the proletarians' actions of different countries and to develop a coherent strategy and tactic at the international level" by presenting what could be a concrete revolutionary measures program. This statement have the merit of responding to the questionings on capitalism and on the necessity of "another society" by opposing the communist revolutionary alternative to the one advanced at that very moment by "Nuit debout" and the leftists with the media's support.

May

End of April, despite what begins to appear to many to be a political dead-end from the struggle point of view, the "conscious" willingness for the fight and the confrontation to the state, its government, its police, its unions, continues to prevail amongst large strata of the working class. It is particularly expressed in the demonstrations: in Paris, minorities increasingly important – 5 000 to 10 000 demonstrators – fight with the unions and their "service of order" over the lead of the procession even if it means to be with the black-blocs "rioters". On several occasions, the union police in connection with the official police represses the demonstrators. In this first part of the demo, no union sound system covers up the slogans and the songs shouted by the demonstrators. Only are they responded by the increasing explosions of the police grenades. All this gives a militant and combative character to the demonstration which encourages all those who participate despite the numerous injured⁶, some

5 . Having, it seems, militant forces as limited as ours, but not present in Paris, the *PCint-Le Proletaire* [*Proletarian* for its English journal] has intervened by leaflet since March 7th, then May 1st and finally May 29th. Globally, its stance is on the same side as ours in regards to the days of action, to "Nuit debout" and to the general orientations of struggle. Amongst the milieu of "former Left communist groups members", often of the ICC, only one text *What does the "Up All Night" Movement Express?* (<http://www.leftcommunism.org/spip.php?article438>) presents "Nuit debout" as "a point of support and reference for present and future struggles" on the *Controverses* web site... from June 11th only. For the ICC, it intervenes March 20th to... defend the supposed lessons of the anti-CPE student movement of 2006! Then May 20th, while strikes are emerging for the first time and while "Nuit debout" is no more a central stake, it publishes on *What is the real nature of the Nuit Debout movement?* in which it denounces this one as the "the anti-Indignados" defending the supposed lessons of the Spanish movement of 2011! No orientation has been put forwards by this organization all along this four months long mobilization. By the way, let's point out that we have not seen any militants of the ICC in any demonstration in Paris...

6 . There have not been any dead despite the fear and the panic

seriously, and the arrests as numerous too. The May 1st demonstration reveals openly the new degree of repression that the government has decided to impose since several demonstrations. Facing the police provocations which split the procession and violently isolate 5000 demonstrators of the lead, the rest of the demonstration of all ages and conditions, refuses to withdraw despite the bludgeonings, the gas and threat of the flash-ball when the "hand-to-hand" situation makes the policemen themselves panic. Even though it was sprayed by tear gas directly to the faces and hit by truncheons for its first lines, and grenade for the others, it "sticks" to the anti-riot police cordons shouting "they don't prevent us demonstrating", "let's us pass" and "we all are rioters". After 45 minutes of confrontation and slogans, surrounded, "fish-trapped"⁷, at its turn, the police is finally forced to withdraw and the demonstration "reunites". The willingness to oppose to the intimidations and the repression – often the same way as described above – won't stop to assess itself amongst a minority every time greater of demonstrators. Up until the very violent street demonstration of June 15th in Paris.

After May 1st, the unions call... for the Deputies to go into action with the opening of the parliamentary debate wishing so, after two months, that the street demonstrations end up. Nevertheless, they don't succeed to discourage the

which was taken hold of numerous police forces when they were in the middle of the crowd, surrounded from every sides, often threatening with their flash-ball at close range, some times using them as in Rennes where there has been a young seriously injured, or still with the flat trajectory fires of grenades. It is both a "miracle" and in great part due to the **political** responsibility of the great masses of demonstrators. In more than one occasion, they could have let to retaliations when the physical relation of forces, because the number and the proximity – sometimes about ten policemen were fully surrounded by the mass –, was obviously in their favour and while the anger was huge. The solidarity with the young "rioters" in front of the repression has also expressed at that "political" level by staying there and by "opposing" the police violence according to the immediate stakes of the struggle. Contrary to the past, it is clear that the government and the ruling class do not try any more to prevent any dead or serious injuries during the working class demonstrations as it do not hesitate to sentence to jail numerous demonstrators arrested on the base of lying police reports.

7 . The police has utilized a new tactic in the demonstrations aiming at cutting them and splitting some parts. The parts fully surrounded were trapped with no exit contrary to the past tactics of the anti-riot police which, always, used to leave an exit for preventing any panic and violent reaction of the crowd which could be returned against... the police itself and provoke many victims. The new tactic comes to confirm that times are changing and so are the political stakes: the bourgeoisie provokes the working class and tries to intimidate it through a frontal repression.

willingness for struggle and are constrained to call new demonstrations all the more so because their refusal to call for a "general strike" helps make them even more discredited. No doubt, there is also one of the explanations for the degree of

the police violence. From then on, the republican, citizen and democratic ideology carried out by "Nuit debout" is no more appropriate and this movement definitively passes at the second plan – the media almost don't say anything on it except for underlining the night confrontations with the police. On the other hand, in May, strikes begin to appear in some sectors, often controlled by the CGT, as in the oil refinery and docks (the cities of Le Havre and Marseille), the truck drivers and the airports; and calls for an unlimited strike are launched at the National French Railway Company (SNCF). It is the moment we decide to distribute a leaflet that we reproduce here after. It seems to us that an opportunity can open at **this precise moment**, for a reduced



"Young black-bloc rioter" of the "first part of the demo" – before and "outside" the unions procession – confronting the riot police in the demonstrations...

time, through which one centre or some centres of struggle from the production places could provide a different dynamic which would break with the one imposed by the unions for one part and which would give a clear-cut class orientation for the movement. There is why we call to the open struggle and attempt to put forwards concrete fight orientations.

But this opportunity has closed quite rapidly and did not lead to any spreading of significant and massive strike, not even in the most militant sectors – because the distrust, very widespread, and the hesitation lasting in particular in sectors like the railway workers. With the absence of generalization of the strike and the media propaganda on the power shortage and the waiting lines of... the motorists willing to go to work, the unions have no difficulty to focus on the "blockage of the economy" in the transport and energy sectors to the detriment of the search for "political blockage" through the going on strike massively of other sectors and their direct confrontation to the capitalist state.

June

Despite the attacks – the murder of a police couple by a young claiming to the Islamic State –, the utilisation of the state of emergency against the strikers and the demonstrators, the blackmail for the success of the Euro football competition (mid-June), the mobilization continues and essentially focus on the street demonstrations during the days of action. The one of June 15th in Paris is no doubt the more violent because the ceaseless provocations of the police. This one goes up to block the procession in many points sometime up to one hour so provoking constant confrontations. Utilizing the incidents and the violences that the police has provoked⁸, the

8 . With the massive participation of all the media for banning the demonstrations, the government used the so-called destruction of the Necker Hospital in Paris – actually a few external windows

government decides in a first time to ban the demonstrations, later to restrict their route and their access by a full police coverage. Little by little, the last strikes running out, the relay so much waited and so necessary from the production places not coming, with the football Euro under way and the holidays coming, the mobilization finishes with a last demonstration July 5th completely surrounded by the police which participates also to the weak number of participants and their feeling of powerlessness after four months of mobilization.

For our part, and after the general (international) amazement which follows the Brexit victory (June 23rd) and signs the United Kingdom exit from the European Union, we decide to publish a leaflet (After the Brexit Victory, The Capitalist Contradictions Explode at all Levels! Only the International Proletarian Revolution Can End it!⁹) that we also distribute to the last demonstrations. The Brexit surprise and its utilization by the media against the mobilization still under way make this event an additional factor of workers' interrogations on the seriousness of the general situation, after the attacks and the war in Middle-East. It seems then to us necessary – in any way, in itself the event Brexit deserved an international statement – to intervene vis-a-vis the mobilization by trying to favour the working class reflection on the insuperable contradictions of capitalism and the indispensable revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

What Lessons ?

The proletariat is not "historically" defeated, nor fully submitted to bourgeois ideology and to the capitalism's interests. The mobilization in France expresses this intact militancy. As well, its (new) distrust towards the unions and the bourgeois ideological ideology centring around the democratic mystification – included under its "Nuit debout" variant which had only a weak success in the working class ranks – reveals that the experiences of the past struggles and the reality of the capitalism's historical dead-end remain in the workers' consciousnesses. Even better, the displayed willingness for the confrontation to the state and for resistance to its massive repression like the slogans heard in the demonstrations, in particular against capitalism and its state, are the reflect of an initial return of the revolutionary perspective in the consciousnesses of a significant minority of workers – **without being yet the clearer one of communism, far from it.** " « The controversy aroused by the Labour Law drifts towards an ideological crisis and a rejection of the system in general » *according to an internal note of a police intelligence French service* [le Service Central du Renseignement Territorial] *on April 28th ("Le monde ou rien", Remarques sur l'agitation sociale en France au printemps 2016, Alèssi Dell'Umbria*¹⁰). Besides these

broken by one individual whose "quality", idiot, agent provocateur or police, does not really matter – that it has carefully organized by blocking the massive demonstration at that precise place during at least one hour and while, since its beginning and all along its route, it have ceaseless assaulted directly and permanently the whole first militant part of the demonstration.

9 . <http://igcl.org/After-the-Brexit-Victory-The-217> (June 25th 2016).

10 . <https://lundi.am/remarques-sur-l-agitation-sociale-en-france>.

positive lessons, important weaknesses remain which can be fateful if they are not overcome.

The first one is the one the proletariat have to politically assume the distrust it feels towards the political and union forces of the capitalist state. That is to confront them resolutely in the struggles which these forces systematically sabotage, by at least fighting with them over the control and the timing of the struggle, indeed its initiative. In particular during this mobilization, this political willingness only expressed in a too limited manner. Basically and in the absence of struggle or particular strike centre which could have been a reference and a pole for an active general mobilization, this political will has only appeared amongst those who fight with the unions over the lead of the demonstrations and refuse to give up to the intimidation and to the violence of the police repression. Unfortunately, they still too much limited themselves only to the question of the confrontation with the police without going further. For instance by attempting to utilize – or to "transform" – these days of action and union demonstrations to make them genuine moments of gathering, spreading and unification of the struggle.

The second one is the lack of regroupment and organization of the most militant and conscious minorities into "struggle committee" or "coordinations" (whatever is the label one gives it) to fight with the unions over the political leadership and the organization of the working class fight. In this mobilization, these ones could have organize to prepare and intervene during the days of action for transforming them in moments and means for the generalization. Amongst these minorities, we include the even more reduced and dispersed minorities, that is the revolutionary and communist groups. Contrary to the massive mobilizations of 2003-2007-2010, no minority regroupment of the kind of "interpro General Assembly" or *coordinations* has actually arisen.

The third, more general, is the fact that the proletariat can not, not yet, raise its class fight at the level required by the economic and political attacks that it suffers and by the stakes of the situation which is sinking into the economic crisis and the exacerbation of the imperialist rivalries and wars. Therefore, it remains incapable of presenting a revolutionary perspective to the whole society which can end up with misery and wars, with capitalism. Yet, the apparition and the extension within the consciousnesses of a revolutionary perspective is fundamental so that these working class struggles succeed to overcome their present limits. Actually, by allowing to understand them as a moment of the historical class struggle, the "hope" for another society provides the necessary energy to each particular struggle so that it can overcome its "economist" and immediate limits; and to those (the most militant workers fractions) who are particularly conscious of it, it energizes them to be the active vanguard of these struggles. And the perspective of communism, that is of the working class insurrection and the dictatorship of the proletariat, for those (the communist groups) who are convinced of it and specifically conscious of it, it energizes them putting forwards the most efficient orientations and slogans of action according to the moments and the stakes of each fight.

This struggle has certainly been the first skirmish of

importance of this new period of international massive confrontations between the classes which has opened up. As important and significant of this period it may be, the mobilization in France underlines the historical responsibility of the proletariat as revolutionary class. It is this dimension that it has to assume every where and every time. Let's be clear, it is not a question of calling to the revolution at every moment and every where. But it matters to set the methods and the objectives – organization-orientations and demands, economic or not – of each struggle from its concrete conditions and possibilities with, as guide (or method) of action, the revolutionary perspective and more specifically the political confrontation with the capitalist state and its overthrow. The working class mobilization in France manifests the fact that, in the period which has opened up, the most militant and conscious workers minorities, whether they are the most advanced fractions of the proletariat or still its revolutionary and communist political minorities, are already a material element of the situation, included... when they are notably absent. Without being the only reason for their absence, "Nuit debout" has certainly taken the place of the "interpro General Assembly" of the previous mobilizations. No doubt that the active, permanent and determined intervention of one revolutionary group, or groups,

particularly the communist ones, in the demonstrations and the gathering of any kind – without mentioning the presence and the intervention of communist militants within the workplaces – would not only have enabled to assert more strongly the class alternative, the practical means and objectives of struggle, amongst the workers, and to make these ones develop. But above all, it would have make them (orientations and slogans) **active material factors** of the situation, factor of the class fight, that is the development of an immediate relation of forces between the capitalist class and the proletariat in France.

There is why is going to be raised, it already raises, the indispensable question of the communist groups regroupment – we do not say fusion in one single organization which would not have any sense – and a coordination of the intervention in the working class struggles by those who set themselves on the "partidist" side (who struggle for the constitution of the communist party as organ of "political leadership") of the Proletarian Camp and who, basically, systematically tend to put forwards the same orientations and the same slogans: make the practical class orientations active and direct factors, make them moments, of the decisive proletarian fights which are beginning.

The IGCL, August 2016.

Leaflet of the IGCL in the Working Class Struggle in France (May 21st 2016)

We reproduce here one of the leaflets we have distributed in the working class mobilization in France. It is the one which calls the whole working class to go on strike while, for the first time, was appearing the concrete possibility that the struggle affect directly the production places. Thus, it could have enabled a rupture with the dead-end of the union's tactic of days of action as well as a collective taking control of the fight from the workplaces and factories. No doubt it is the only moment, a few days, at best a week or two, when this possibility presents itself. As reduced it is since the strikes break out in sectors that the CGT traditionally controls, the possibility does exist and the political stake is real at that moment. There is why, by launching concrete slogans and orientations, we believe it is our task – as one expression of the Communist Left – to attempt to intervene directly to politically orientate the fight of our class.

An All Out Strike in Every Sector of Production? Now is the Time!

For the first time since the announcement of the "Labor Law" [the so-called "El Khomri law" - the Labor Minister's name], strikes have begun to hit areas of French production, mainly in transport: road, rail, airports, dockers, sailors... Strikes in production imply **collective class action and decision-making**. This is precisely the new development that can change the situation and the nature of the confrontation with the Socialist Party government of Hollande and the capitalist state. That is why the present moment – mid-May – is certainly the last opportunity for a generalized working class response and so to impose a class political relation of force which would oblige the French ruling class and its state, the government, its Left and Right political forces, and its unions to retreat. Even if the "Labor Law" only codifies into bourgeois law worsening capitalist exploitation that has already been under way for years, it nevertheless remains that its legal adoption would dramatically accelerate the deterioration of proletarian working and living conditions whether they are on a fixed wage or are precarious, unemployed, working students, pensioners, etc.

The Unions and Others like "Nuit debout" ["Up All Night"] Sabotage the Generalized and United Working Class Struggle

One particular feature – not the only one – of the many union Days of Action since early March has been precisely to avoid any **collective** decision of struggle from the workplaces and workers' General Assemblies (GA). Thus, in the absence of GA and struggle or strike committees, millions of workers find themselves constrained to take an individual decision, from their own personal conviction, to participate in the strikes of the Days of Action and in the street demonstrations. While 75% of the "French population" was against the "Labor Law" according to the polls organized by the ruling class, most of them remained isolated from one another and unable to experience the collective strength of their class. In great part this explains the low number of strikers during the Days of Action.

Another factor is the distrust in the face of the division of labor organized between the government, the "moderate" unions (CFDT) and the supposed "more radical" unions (CGT, FO, SUD...) as well as the different Days of Action planned in advance, since early March, to sabotage any united strike generalized to all sectors – the memory of the past failures during the massive

working class mobilizations of 2003, 2007 and 2010 is still fresh.

Despite all this, **and despite the state of emergency** after the 2015 Paris attacks which allows increased repression and the prohibition of street demonstrations, militancy and general anger have continued to be expressed particularly in the street demonstrations. “Youths, the not so young, adults, elderly”, salaried of any condition and contract, unemployed, pensioned, students, college students, found themselves side by side faced with the massive and provocative repression of the riot police (which the unions’ “security” assisted with baseball bats!). Since the first demonstrations, on March 9th and after, the union sabotage of the mass strike has become obvious to most. It is in response to this vacuum – from the ruling class point of view – the “Nuit debout” [“Up All Night”] gatherings were organized from March 31st in one of the central places of Paris: Place de la République. In the days and weeks which followed, the media and the TV news channels never stopped giving it maximum publicity. And with good reason: the “citizenship and democratic” ideology of the “Up All Night” movement has come to reinforce the union sabotage by robbing any class opposition to the Socialist Party government and to the fight against capitalism. Let’s have a closer look:

*“Since March 31st, assemblies have formed and the **people** [not the workers or proletarians] discuss and exchange. (...) The Human [sic!] should be at the heart of **our leaders**. (...) Every day, we are thousands who occupy the public space to regain **our place within the République**” (!) (Presentation of the daily bulletin Nuit debout, April 22nd, our emphasis).*

As if the class interests of the exploited and revolutionary class could be represented by the “République”, that is the state of the capitalist class. As if “our” leaders, at the service of capitalism, could care about “humanity” – certainly the most naive and ignorant wanted to say the exploited class – as much as they care about keeping **their** national capital afloat against that of their competitors; and more generally about capitalism’s survival.

However capitalism’s crisis is inexorable. If we, the working class, let it, it can only lead to a 3rd imperialist World War, the only “solution” to the chronic crisis of overproduction being the massive destruction of the surplus of productive forces, proletarians and material. Lining up behind the bourgeois democratic state not only guarantees that our struggles of resistance against the worsening of our living and working conditions will fail, that we won’t succeed to limit capital’s attacks at least temporarily, but also that the growing economic sacrifices will be followed by massive sacrifices of our lives in a generalized imperialist slaughter.

It is as the Exploited and Revolutionary Class that We Must Generalize and Unite the Struggle

Members of the working class, of the exploited class, of the international proletariat, our place is not within the bourgeois democratic Republic which sends us its riot police today, and the army tomorrow. Our place is in the working class, in proletarian struggles against capitalism, its government, its Left (primarily the Socialist and “Communist” Parties) as well as Right wing Parties, its unions, its police and its justice system. The bourgeois state is not our state. France, as all other nations, is not our “country”. Proletarians have no homeland, nor nation, and still less a bourgeois democratic republic, to defend.

After two and a half months of general hesitation, the fact that, since May 17th, workers in some sectors of production have collectively decided to go on strike and to spread the fight gives the opportunity that many have been waiting for to take action. Waiting at this point certainly means risking missing the opportunity for a generalized and united struggle which can force the government to retreat and to withdraw its attack. Let us have no illusions: the withdrawal of this law would not result in an end to capitalism and exploitation. But it would bring about a temporary and relative halt – still better than nothing – to the increased exploitation that the bourgeoisie will attempt to begin once more. And it would give confidence to the whole working class in its own strength and in its fight against capitalism.

Therefore, wherever it is possible – in particular in the largest workplaces and factories– let us take the following actions:

- **hold general assemblies to decide to go on strike;**
- **appoint elected and revocable strike committees;**
- **organize mass delegations to the nearby workplaces and factories;**
- **spread and unify the strike and the struggle by holding assemblies open to all;**
- **oppose the unions’ and Left parties’ leadership and control of the struggle, the assemblies, the decisions, the actions and the slogans.** Don’t let them sabotage our struggle.

The working class struggle is economic as well as political, that is against the bourgeois state, the centralized organization of the capitalist class, its government (whether it is a Right or Left wing one) and its political, union and repressive organs. To the most militant workers conscious of the historical stakes:

- don’t hesitate to take the lead in this class political fight;
- regroup in struggle and mobilization committees;
- approach, make contact, come to discuss and struggle alongside the communist revolutionary groups which bear and assume both the daily political struggle and the revolutionary and internationalist perspective of a genuine communist society.

At stake is the defence of our immediate economic and political interests as a class. At stake is also the destruction of this world system of increasing misery and wars.

The International Group of the Communist Left (*Revolution or War*), May21st 2016.

International Situation

Communique of the IGCL after the attacks in Nice France and the Attempt of Military Coup in Turkey: Explosions to All Directions and at all levels of World Capitalism's Contradictions (July 16th 2016).

[Warning: this text has been translated from French by a comrade from France and it could not be corrected, nor verified, by a native English speaking comrade. Thus, beyond its possible "heavy" and difficult readability, if the reader finds any political confusion or mistake, we call him/her to refer to the French version]

The attack in Nice (84 dead) the day before yesterday and the military coup in Turkey last night (apparently defeated at the time of writing) are the last outward signs, after the British Brexit three weeks ago, of the exacerbation of capitalism's contradictions and their open eruption in various events of major importance. Apparently, "the coup [in Turkey], along with Islamic State attacks, Britain's vote to leave the European Union and other developments gave a sense of events spinning out of control" (*The Guardian*¹¹, July 16th 2016). We would be facing an irrational chaos in front which "we" should be powerless.

Yet, it is not the case. All these events are the product, direct or indirect, of the dynamic and the rules of capitalism in crisis and, at their turn, become additional factors for this historical crisis. As such, they are the latest expression of the new period that the attacks against *Charlie Hebdo* January 2015 in Paris, and above all the reaction of the ruling class on this occasion (state of emergency still effective today, street demonstration of January 11th behind the main heads of state, relaunching of the military interventions in Iraq and Syria) had announced.

Imperialism and War Dictate the Decisions of the Capitalist Class

The incapability to overcome the 2008 crisis and its consequences provokes that the historical crisis of capitalism hits directly its centre and the most experienced fractions of the world bourgeoisie. In first place, the maintenance of the open crisis within the very great powers of North America and Western Europe and the collapse of the myth of a possible economic relief coming from the so-called emerging countries, such as China or Brazil, makes the economic and imperialist rivalries more acute and critical: each national capital is more and more "distraught" for its own survival. Thus the imperialist

rivalries and wars become the main factor, besides the attacks against the working class, which dictates the conduct and the decisions of each national capital. The United States in retreat at all levels, economic and imperialist, is the main warmonger because its military force remains its main efficient tool, if not the only one¹². But it goes the same with all the other national bourgeoisies, whether they are great, medium or small ones.

The Acuteness of the Capitalist Contradictions: Main Cause for the Brexit and the Military Coup in Turkey

Even though we don't have, at the time we are writing, the information and the necessary distance for making a precise analysis of the Turkish military coup, there is no doubt that the orientation of the country foreign policy is one of its stakes; whatever is the consciousness of its protagonists: "The military does not want to become engaged on the ground in Syria (...). And it wants to step up the fight against the PKK." (idem¹³). Even defeated, the military coup in Turkey is a major event because the place and the geostrategic role of the country, it is the second army of NATO after the USA, which shows that the time for clear choices comes closer and even begins to impose itself: lining up besides the United States which supports

12 . « *The American economy, far from having overcome this devastating crisis it had itself provoked, survives to its evils by rejecting their negative effects to the four corners of the world market. It is in permanent war on different international fronts, from Africa to Middle East, even though the Obama administration prefers to act indirectly by utilizing the soft power and the financing to political forces which participates to the different civil wars it has itself provoked. It fights on the financial markets to enable the dollar to carry on being the ruling currency and a reassuring refuge for speculation. But despite the disbursement of 3300 billions dollars at the service of the banks, the capital does not go to real economy which has difficulties to recover. Speculation is still there, the public debt rises up (130%), the federal deficit is 15 000 billions dollars, the unemployment is at least the double of the official number (6.2) and the risk of bursting of new speculative bubbles is on the agenda* " (translated by us from Italian of the article of the ICT on its web site which has just been published : <http://www.leftcom.org/it/articles/2016-07-15/considerazioni-sui-fatti-di-dallas>).

13 . *The Guardian* quotes "Stephen Flanagan who served in the Obama administration's National Security Council and is now an analyst for the Rand corporation".

11 . The English newspaper quotes a specialist, Kemal Kirisci, director of the Turkey Project at Brookings.

the Kurdish enemy; or rather finding support beside powers offering a more favourable alternative. For the specialists of the bourgeoisie, the imperialist dimension of the event is beyond any doubt: *"Whatever new reality emerges in Ankara this weekend, it is not good news for the United States and its NATO allies"* (*Washington Post*, K. DeYoung, July 15th 2016 – 11.15pm). The difference between Obama who *"call[s] to support President Erdogan"* and Merkel who *"condemns the putsch but takes distance with Erdogan"* (*Le Monde*, July 16th 2016) provides an indication of the stakes and contradictions of the foreign policy of Turkey that explains, at least partly, the military coup of last night.

Still more important and full of significances and consequences for the course of the historical events and the stakes of the period opened up from 2015 is the case of the British bourgeoisie and its break with the European Union. Whether it has been wanted or not by the whole English ruling class, the Brexit¹⁴ indicates, even more than the Turkish example, that the time is well and truly for clear-cut and definitive choices in front the historical stakes. The English bourgeoisie is the most experienced in the world and it can be surprising that it appeared as particularly disorientated the days which followed the referendum result. It is quite possible that some of its fractions had not hoped making that leap – to exit of the European Union – **today**. Even that it may be contrary to some immediate economic interests.

Even so, some weeks after, it clearly appears that the English bourgeoisie, with the new T. May's government, is going to fully assume the exit from the EU and that it displays an attitude of defiance, and even of provocation, vis-a-vis this one. The Boris Johnson's appointment as Minister who seemed yet politically dead after his denying for being Prime Minister, is one of its expression. This means that the basic historical tendency of English imperialism, of opposition to a continental Europe gathered today around the main German power and its historical lining up beside the North American imperialism, has just imposed itself definitively **precisely because the present contradictory conditions of today**. The process leading to generalized imperialist war and passing through an increasing imperialist polarization has imposed itself, may be sooner than expected, to British capitalism and whatever is the consciousness of the English bourgeois politicians themselves. It forced them to definitively choose the United States to the detriment of the European Union in the inescapable course of the imperialist rivalries driving to a 3rd World War... if the revolutionary class, the proletariat, doesn't succeed to oppose and to bring down capitalism.

Because the other factor of the world situation and of its course is definitively the exploited and revolutionary class,

the international proletariat. Obviously the proletarians have nothing to win, and all to lose, in choosing between Erdogan and the military in Turkey. They rather should draw their inspiration from the massive strikes of the city of Bursa in the car industry (May 2015): it is the better mean to defend at best their class interests. As well, it is the more likely that the reluctances of a good part of the political apparatus of the English bourgeoisie to adopt the Brexit **from now on** are due to its consciousness that the whole proletariat in the UK is not ready to accept with no fight back the political and economic implications, that is sacrifices and greater submission, that the Brexit implies. The English ruling class takes a risk when it sets itself openly so soon so much "anti-European" and "pro-American". Doing so, it discloses its meaning to the greatest number: the future generalized war. This is another fundamental contradiction, political and historical this one: the world bourgeoisie confronted with the crisis and the war at the same time, can't play on one of the two elements to confront and ideologically enlist the proletariat, whether in the name of peace or in the name of prosperity supposedly to happen, while it is forced to attack it every time harder.

Great Britain, France and Western Europe at the Core of the World Capitalism's Contradictions

After having been postponed to the peripheral countries during decades for their main consequences, all the contradictions of capitalism come back to directly strike its historical core. Western Europe, particularly the old colonial powers as France and Great Britain, finds itself at the epicentre of the historical storm which comes and whose first gusts of wind make themselves felt: crisis and wars feed one another while the working class tends to oppose to capital, to its crisis, and while some of its more combative and conscious fractions begin to raise the necessity for destroying capitalism – as the working class just showed it in France during the struggle against "the labour law El Khomri".

The English and French bourgeoisies, historically declining, feel and live even more directly and hardly the open explosion of all these contradictions because these ones have an immediate impact on their capacity to remain the minimum player, even of second order (in relation to the USA, Germany and still, at a lesser degree, China and Russia), on the imperialist scene. And this while, unlike other players as the United States for instance, the weight of the traditions and the experiences of struggle of their respective proletariat, as the European proletariat, continues to represent a danger and an obstacle.

"There can't be a greater contrast between a society as the French society, divided internally by the rise of populism of the National Front of Marine Le Pen, the labour conflicts [the Spanish journalist refers to the four

14 . See our statement of late June 24th *After the Brexit Victory, The Capitalist Contradictions Explode at all Levels! Only the International Proletarian Revolution Can End it!* (<http://igcl.org/After-the-Brexit-Victory-The-217>).

months of workers' struggle and demonstrations, violently repressed, against the Labour Law] *and the bitter conflicts within the Left and the Right, and the seriousness of the terrorist challenge that it confronts. This fierceness of jihadism against France comes from its external heritage – colonial power in all the region, from Morocco to Syria – but also from the problems of integration of the Muslim minority and the situation of the country as emblem of secularism [laïcisme] and republican values"* (*El País*, José Ignacio Torreblanca, July 16th 2016, we underline in bold and we translate it).

Actually, the French bourgeoisie is, because its history as old declining imperialist power, particularly exposed to the explosion of capitalism's contradictions. Hardly competing with its direct rivals at the economic level, obliged to line up at best as lieutenant of Germany at the imperialist level, it attempts with great difficulties to maintain its rank and to limit the lost of historical influence by its military interventions in Africa and Middle East. But historically, it is also confronted to a working class which, even though it has suffered important setbacks all along the last decades, has kept a certain combativity and a particular experience coming from the 1968 massive strike which remains in all the workers memories.

For the French bourgeoisie too, **crisis and war present directly and concretely to it**, no doubt still more directly than for its European colleagues and in a particular acute manner, and they weaken its ideological and political capacity to confront the proletariat. It is surely what explains the violence, unheard since a long time, of the repression of the demonstrations and the strikes of late spring. At its turn, this violent repression became a factor of "political radicalization" amongst large strata of the proletariat of this country.

The Historical Role of the Minorities of Combative and Conscious Proletarians and the International Communist Party

If the period opened up in 2015 imposes to the ruling classes economic, political, imperialist choices, each time more clear-cut, it goes the same for the working class, its most combative and experienced fractions and its revolutionary political minorities. For the ones as for the other, the "happy medium is less and less appropriate" today at the risk of serious failures. The consciousness that capitalism is not reformable and that it leads to more misery, sacrifices and wars, starts spreading again in the

workers ranks. This is the main lesson that we can draw from the working class struggle in France of this Spring. The return in the workers consciousnesses, as confuse they may be, of the need of capitalism's destruction and the possibility of another society becomes a factor which determines the willingness and the determination in the struggle as well as the means and the immediate slogans to put forwards. The fact that the war, as the crisis, become a concrete fact affecting the working class masses, inescapably accompanied by a growing repression, highlights to the eyes and the consciousnesses of the greater number the essentially political dimension of the class fight. Because, in the new situation of today, this latter confront directly and immediately to the capitalist state apparatus. At this level too, the bursting of capitalism's contradictions exposes clearly the antagonisms of classes in all their dimensions and, in particular, in the relation of the revolutionary proletariat with the state of the capitalist class.



Police blockage of the massive and violent working class demonstration of June 14th in Paris.

For the most combative and determined fractions of proletarians, the time is up to regroup in the factories, the workplaces, and if it is not possible, in the struggle or action committees between companies and workplaces. It matters to take the lead of the class fights, to organize them – strikes and street demonstrations – so that they assume the political confrontation with the forces of

the bourgeois state "within the workers milieu", Left parties and unions, and fight for the control and leadership of their struggle **while operating the opposition to massive and particularly violent repression of the state**. Because the response and the confrontation with the violence of the bourgeois state becomes a central, direct and concrete matter for the great masses of the proletariat, included and above all in the so-called "democratic" countries. As well, they must not hesitate to contact the revolutionary and communist political groups and to rely on their political positions; as well as to discuss with them for regrouping the revolutionary energies around the communist program and the slogans of workers insurrection, of destruction of capitalism and dictatorship of the proletariat. Only these ones provide the means and the method for the fights of the period which has opened up.

For the communist minorities, it is time to end up with the hesitations in regards with the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat in front of the stakes of the new situation. The lost of confidence in the revolutionary perspective which has affected the whole working class since the

collapse of Stalinism has favoured and has resulted in a loss of confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat amongst the revolutionary and communist militants and organizations. The organizations of the Communist Left have also suffered up to become today dispersed and still more isolated from the great masses of the class. Moreover, they are divided between the forces which work more or less resolutely for the regroupment and the constitution of the world party of tomorrow and the forces, often more numerous, which turn their back to this fight and join more or less explicitly the anti-party milieu belonging to the councilism or economist trend – to refer to anti-political and anti-organization currents experienced by the working class movement history.

The first ones, struggling for the party, are themselves often hesitating and timorous – politically of course – to engage firmly in this fight for the party and the regroupment through the means of political confrontations and debates with other organizations and currents. Very often, not always, they lack of confidence, determination and political conviction in regards to their role and to what they historically represent – "be realistic, we are nothing and so small" are we often answered as if being small and weak should change something to the historical problems. The seconds turn their back to the political dimension of the class fight and its implications for the class as a whole as well as for the communists: for one part by falling into the "democratic" traps and illusions put forwards by the bourgeoisie as, for instance, by falling into the fetishism of the general assembly (after the apology of the ideology of the "indignados" in Spain, we have witnessed it again with the organization of the "nuit debout" [Up All Night] in Paris); on the other part, by thinking that the groups of the Communist Left, their tradition and their fight for the party belong to the past and that it matters to break free of them.

There too, time is not to question on the necessity for revolutionary regroupment and communist organizations; and still less the party. As the citizen and republican ideology of the "nuit debout" had taken a back seat from May in France behind the strikes and the confrontations to the state and its police, for the revolutionaries and the communists the time is not to keep turning over the supposed failures of the past but to the determined struggle so that to assume the historical political fight of the proletariat whose main and indispensable tool is the communist organization.

"We need to create a movement which unites all those who can see the problems we are talking about here. This movement (or party) has to have at its head a clear vision of the society we want. We would call it a communist programme. (...) At the moment there are many groups and individuals around the world who recognise this but we are either too scattered, or too divided, to take a lead in forming such a united movement. Some object to it on principle declaring that the spontaneous movement will take care of itself. We wish we could share their confidence. We think responsible revolutionaries should re-examine their differences, asking ourselves if the things that we thought divided us now do so in the light of this new period in working class struggle. We should emphasise not the little we disagree on but the much that we agree on. We should seek to work together in common struggles not simply to recruit this or that individual to our own organisation, but to widen the consciousness of what a real working class struggle means. In the face of the obstacles we have outlined above it would be suicidal not to." (Editorial of *Revolutionary Perspectives* #59, journal of the ICT in Great Britain, 2011).

The International Group of the Communist Left
(*Revolution or War*), July 16th 2016.

Workers' struggles throughout the world

At the very moment the demonstrations multiplied in France and strikes seemed to spread, the workers in Belgium protested against the same attacks. It is all around the planet, in all continents, that the working class is forced to struggle and defend its living and working conditions because the growing attacks of the ruling classes.

Belgium: 80 000 demonstrators gathered May 24th in the Brussels streets against the Peeters Law on the Labour regulations. What mattered to the unions was not the joint mobilization with the proletarians in France but the Labour Minister Peeters call for "social dialogue". During that same month, train drivers of the national company SNCB went on wildcat strike. Their company wanted to reduce the salary during the sick leaves or holidays and advocated for a increased productivity contract.

Germany: in July, strikes for increases in salary developed in several places. Amazon (Bad Hersfeld) Bayerische Milchindustrie EG (Jessen) a factory producing milk, Technikmuseum (Technical Museum of Kreuzberg in Berlin), the public transports in Hildesheim (Lower Saxony), the Verdi union's employees (sic) (Frankfort) and more than 110 000 salaried have also disrupted the car industry with

strikes.

USA: in April, there have been the most important movement since 2011 with a strike of around 40 000 workers in the big Telecom company Verizon. 1700 workers of the AT&T West Telecom company in San Diego, California, have also been on strike despite the CWA union's efforts (with other unions) to isolate the six weeks strike of the Verizon workers. Teachers of 94 schools on 97 of Detroit have got a joint one day sick leave for protesting because the schools could not pay them. This action has been done outside the unions framework and against the teachers' union who were not opposed to the austerity measures. See the ICT article: <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2016-02-14/detroit-teachers-sickout>

Spain: disillusioned with the unions which don't defend them, the "kellies" (the hostels chambermaids) have gone into

action. They multiply the pickets at the hostels front doors and denounce the exploitation that they suffer. Precarious contracts, unpaid overtime, lower wages, worsening of the working conditions are the result of the Labour "reform" in Spain.

Mexico: repression in Oaxaca, 15 hours of violent fights, 8 dead, tens of injured, 22 disappeared. On the morning of Sunday June 19th 2016, forces of the Mexican Federal Police got to the city of Nochixtlán in Oaxaca for evacuating the highway blockage set up by the members of the CNTE (the teachers' union), the students, fathers and mothers since eight days. With an extreme violence, the police attacked the demonstrators, first with tear gas and flash-ball shootings, and later with firearm during several hours. 8 lost their lives after the violences. See the ICP article *Mexico: Bloody bourgeois repression and the "danse macabre" of the "far" left* (www.pcint.org) and the ICT's one *Letter from Mexico on Teachers Fight against Privatisation of Schools* (<http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2016-07-24/letter-from-mexico-on-teachers-fight-against-privatisation-of-schools>).

Brazil: the police utilized stun and tear gas grenades for dispersing the demonstrators on the passage of the Olympic flame in a one working class neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro two days before the Olympic Game opened under high security. The Brazilian state deployed 82 000 policemen, soldiers and private security militias for the Olympic Games.

Greece: May 6 and 7th, general strike in Athens against two law projects on a new pension "reform" and on taxes.

Tunisia: in April on the island of Kerkennah, there have been a week long struggle after the intervention of security militia to end up a 3 months sit-in by job-seekers in front the Petrofac company head office. Finally, the military forces had to take the island under direct control.

South Africa: around 4000 garbage men of the Pikitup company have been on illegal strike for several weeks late March. They denounced the gap in pays and demanded wage

rises. Those workers rejected also the appeal that their own union made for going back work Friday March 11th. In stead, they intensified their strike and get down in Johannesburg streets.

Slovakia: 15% of the country's teachers mobilized since October behind the call of the ISU collective which claims to be non unionised. Unlimited strike, demonstrations, human chains, schools closed (¼ of them the day of demonstration): it is the longest movement of the history of this small European country.

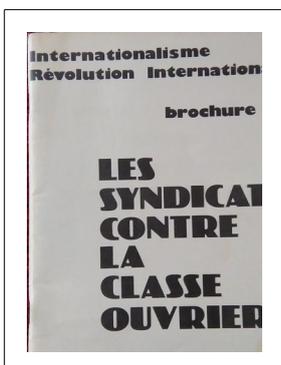
India: more than 10 000 clothing workers throughout the Bengaluru state have gone to the streets and protested against the limitations that the Organization of the Contingency Fund of the Employees set up for the withdrawing of the totality of their financial contribution before the age of 58. The demonstrators burnt 3 buses and the police had to resort to charges and tear gas grenades to disperse the workers who were demonstrating, the majority of them being women. During the last weeks, various strikes had arisen in the Indian car factories (Suzuki, Tata or Honda) or in the subcontractors (Bosch, Rico and Pricol). Those strikes were for wage rises, improvement of the working conditions and against the bosses' despotism (see in French, *Le Prolétaire* 519, March-April-May 2016, www.pcint.org).

Saudi Arabia: the workers reacted late Spring against the delay of wages payment in the construction sector and the risk of expulsion of 5000 immigrant workers by the company BTP. They destroyed cars and lorries from the company in one of the greatest building site as well as housing of the National Guard in Riyadh.

Vietnam: there have been around 50 strikes and labour conflicts during the two first months of the year. One of these strikes has involved more than 20 000 workers of Pouchen Vietnam Company in the province of Dong Nai.

Normand, July 2016

French Reprinting of the ICC Pamphlet *Unions Against the Working Class*



For our readers from North America, we have reprinted the ICC pamphlet in French *Unions Against the Working Class* in French that it is difficult to find on this continent and which was written en 1976. It is also available in English. For the readers from Europe who could not get it directly from the ICC, they can also write us at our email intleftcom@gmail.com or still at our Postal address : CP 55045, Centre Maisonneuve, H1W 1B0 Montréal, Canada. Even though our group, the IGCL, does not necessarily claim all the arguments and positions of this pamphlet, we think it is an historical document which matters to make known by the young generations and which can serve as a "programmatic" reference for today's communist groups.

Debate within the Proletarian Camp

Correspondence

The correspondence with a comrade of North America which follows, is interesting for two main reasons. First, it reveals the differences between the countries with "Anglo-Saxon" kind of union tradition where, still today, a great part of the workers, above all in the most important companies, are obliged to be unionised contrary to the "Latin" tradition countries as in France or Italy. In these countries, not being member of the union does not change nothing to the working contract, nor to the possibility to be on strike and participating to the struggles. This difference had often provoked political misunderstandings amongst the communist groups about the attitude to adopt vis-a-vis the union "meetings" or about what exactly represent the General Assemblies (GA or AG in French) whether they be called or not by the unions. The other reason is that this correspondence raises the question of the relation between the economic dimension and the political dimensions of the working class struggles. This a question to debate and clarify within the Proletarian Camp.

A Sympathizer's Mail:

I've read in your balance-sheet of the world working class struggles that you mention the unions' strikes. Is it correct to just associate the strikes under union initiative with the working class struggle itself? Does it not lead to confusion? For instance, the union I work for, plans to go on negotiation for the renewal of the convention in the hostel sector and, probably according to them, there'll be a strike because they think the negotiations will be tense. In this situation, it is not at all of my initiative, nor of my work colleagues', we are not in struggle, we obey and that is all. If we consider only the struggles initiated by the workers, I'm sure that there would not be so much in your balance of the world struggles, would not be? My question is: can we really consider the struggles under union initiatives and their contingent of opportunist workers as being expression of the class struggle? Today? And if yes, why? (YS).

Our Response :

Dear comrade YS, we appreciate your critical comment about the articles *Working Class Struggles around the World* in our journal. At first, a struggle outside the union framework is not automatically political or revolutionary. Like it is the case of numerous strikes in China, it can be only an economic struggle which reflects the worsening of the life of the proletarians at their work. For this, they are necessary even though they don't question the capitalism itself.

You are right to say that there are strikes which are on initiative of the unions. Most of these strikes are of one day staggered on several weeks or even months. They aim at preventing a general strike, dividing the proletarians by sector, region, country and by union. The unions so show that they are organizations defending capitalism and sabotaging the struggles.

So why do we mention the "unions' strikes" in the world? For keeping a minimum of credibility, the unions are obliged to accept some demands under the pressure of their members as well as the means of action up to strikes. Later, they'll put forward the compromises during the negotiations and the sabotage of the struggle. As says the introduction of one of the articles on the *Working Class Struggles around the World*, "The outpouring of anger and fighting spirit overflows into all countries, on all continents. But for all that they fail to fend off the attacks. Because the working class, for the most part, remains behind the slogans and demands of leftists and the unions - slogans and demands which constrain and limit the struggle within the framework of state and capitalist ideology. Because it has yet to take up the fight against the sabotage and corruption of its struggles, against the very forces responsible for setting them up. Because it can't seem to pull itself up to the level of conscious political struggle; i.e. up to political confrontation against all forces of the bourgeois state apparatus, particularly against those which "impose themselves on the workers' terrain", the unions, official or "rank and file", of the political Left and leftist forces, including those hiding behind the various and diverse apolitical and democratic mystifications."

If we look for the ideal strike or struggle outside the union framework, we won't mention anything. The present struggles reflect the level of the working class' consciousness. This level of consciousness develops during the struggle whether they be economic and/or controlled by the unions. "Political and economic strikes, mass strikes and partial strikes, demonstrative strikes and fighting strikes, general strikes of individual branches of industry and general strikes in individual towns, peaceful wage struggles and street massacres, barricade fighting – all these run through one another, run side by side, cross one another, flow in and over one another – it is a ceaselessly moving, changing sea of phenomena. And the law of motion of these phenomena is clear: it does not lie in the mass strike itself nor in its technical details, but in the political and social proportions of the forces of the revolution" (Rosa Luxemburg, *The Mass Strike*, 1906).

That means that the workers' consciousness develops during the movement of demands. To silence these demands would be idealism. It would be censoring the combativity and the anger of the proletariat at the world scale. It would be believing that the level of consciousness develops by sermons. "But admitting that the whole or even the majority of the working class, given the domination of capital, can acquire a communist consciousness **before** the seizure of power and the establishment of the Dictatorship of the proletariat, is simply idealism" (*Marxism and Class Consciousness*, translated from French by us, <http://www.leftcom.org/fr/articles/2002-02-01/marxisme-et-conscience-de-classe>).

Fraternally, Normand

The following text is the first part of a contribution by one member of our group on the question of class consciousness. The second part will be published in the next issue. The IGCL stated in agreement with this text at the General Meeting it held late July. Nevertheless, our reflection and internal debate is just beginning. We present it to the readers and the political groups of the Proletarian Camp so that they can participate, we invite them to do so, to our reflection and debate. In particular, we call the attention on our position towards Lenin's pamphlet *What is to be done?*, so disparaged or fetishized depending to the cases. According to us, its main goal which bases it – and based great part of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party's political action – was to "take up actively (...) the development of [the working class] political consciousness", to "raise its consciousness". It is his main argument that he does not cease delivering all along *What is to be done?* against the Economists – the Councilists of that time. In this sense, those who today reject Lenin and *What is to be done?* because it takes back, formally, Kautsky's position according to which the class consciousness can't come from the very revolutionary class itself, make him a fake criticism which gives them the excuse for preventing to pronounce on the theoretical and political basic questions and above all about their implications: **the political dimension of the class fight and the need of the Party**. It is all the more regrettable, or (politically) dishonest, since Lenin himself came back on the *What is to be done?* 's formulations : "Nor at the Second Congress did I have any intention of elevating my own formulations, as given in *What Is To Be Done?*, to "programmatically" level, constituting special principles. On the contrary, the expression I used – and it has since been frequently quoted – was that the Economists had gone to one extreme. *What Is To Be Done?*, I said, straightens out what had been twisted by the Economists" (*Lenin*, Preface to the Collection Twelve Years, september 1907).

On Class Consciousness

Any discussion or debate about class consciousness makes no sense, has no interest for the proletariat, if we do not found it on the basic militant principle : how to raise the proletariat's class consciousness. Therein lies the debate that ignited generations of revolutionary militants, causing various lines of separation within revolutionary organizations between different tendencies, currents or fractions.

Any discussion of class consciousness considered in itself, that is to say in the abstract, is a discussion of living room intellectuals by its non-militant nature, precisely because it does not first ask the question "how to raise class consciousness" but rather "what is class consciousness." The nature of the question of course will change the content of the answer. Now when the question was badly posed by different political currents, answers invariably tended to focus on one aspect at the expense of a general conception, therefore dialectic. For example, Georg Lukacs and his *History and Class Consciousness* virtually only put the emphasis on the philosophical aspect of consciousness. Similarly, the economist, anarchist, syndicalist currents and even by some aspects councilist see class consciousness only in the economic relations between bosses and workers on the workplace. Finally, for the revisionist current, the socialist doctrine being a bourgeois ideologue's invention and the proletariat being too uneducated, one had to adapt socialism, and therefore the party, to the civilized bourgeois society.

All these political currents have made the mistake of putting aside the fundamental aspect of the class consciousness from the revolutionary point of view, i.e the political aspect. Far be it from us to say here that there is no philosophical factor, economic, cultural, etc. to class consciousness. Only the political aspect transcends and binds together all other aspects. The political nature of the class struggle and the proletarian class consciousness is

coming from the fact that the working class is both an exploited class and a revolutionary class, that is to say without any power in capitalist society and directly in opposition to the capitalist state. The revolutionaries need a clear conception of the goal, that is to say, a political program, and effective ways to achieve this goal, that is to say, a political organization which allows the seizure of political power. « *In our view, revolution is a process, the first stages of which we are now experiencing, for it is only by the struggle for power itself that the masses can be assembled, drilled and formed into an organisation capable of taking power.* » » (RoW #4¹⁵) The conquest of power by the proletariat, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is the political mean to give birth to the communist society.

The basic premises being established, the militant and political nature of class consciousness, we can start to reclaim past discussions of the labor movement on the question of consciousness. While this debate was never at the front of the scene of the labor movement, it is always underlying during other debates such as the debate between the Economists and Iskra in Russia or the debate on the mass strike between Luxemburg-Pannekoek and Kautsky, both in the early 20th century. This method allows us to reclaim the experience of revolutionary currents in the labor movement. Indeed, when there is a debate on a political question, it usually forms a revolutionary Left facing a conservative Right within the organization. The political confrontation between fractions in the organization has the beneficial result of separating the wheat from the chaff. Finally, this method prevents us from astray us to want to reinvent the wheel.

15 . Anton Pannekoek, *Marxist Theory and Revolutionary Tactics*, 1912 –
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/pannekoek/1912/tactics.htm>

The Manifesto of the Communist Party

The *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels for the Communist League in 1848, marks the first attempt to give the proletariat a political program to guide the struggle. This manifesto is primarily intended to provide a scientific and historical basis for the class struggle, that is to say, to mark a frank opposition to utopian socialism currents. These aimed in general to put forward moral principles to adapt and transform society. Marx and Engels criticize such reasoning by stating that « *the theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes* » (Marxists.org). The idea expressed here is that communism is not a theory that is born in the minds of some thinkers of genius. Rather, communism is the existing movement in capitalist society and born directly from contradictions of this society that tends to make possible its abolition. The Communists are the activists who theorize and practice « *the real movement which abolishes the present state of things* » (Marxists.org) as a program that is then used to make conscious struggles orienting them more clearly. Similarly, the manifesto wishes to stand out the different types of petty-bourgeois socialism which all tend, in different ways of course, to adapt the principles of socialism to bourgeois society. Thus, it founds an autonomous political action of the proletariat on a historical and scientific basis.

The Communists are the bearers of class consciousness. They are a voluntary regroupement of militants that understand the final goal. « *The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.* » (Marxists.org)

However, Communists do not use this advantage they have over the rest of the proletariat to carry out their own special interests. Instead, they use this awareness of the final goal to ensure political leadership of the class struggle, that is to say, raise the rest of the proletariat to the level of consciousness to enable it to implement the political means of its liberation. That is the deep meaning of the sentence on the constitution of the proletariat as a class, and so in a party of the Communist Manifesto. « *The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.* » (Marxists.org)

What is to Be Done?

The fundamental importance of Lenin's *What has to be done?* lies in the fact that it had as a starting point a reflection on how to raise class consciousness. This makes it a reference text for any serious debate about consciousness. Also, as we must criticize Kautsky's thesis echoed by Lenin making socialism an invention of bourgeois intellectuals, so one can not use this error of Lenin, that he himself confessed later, to evacuate all other excellent positions that are in the text.

First, we have to take care of Lenin's kautskist thesis : « *We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia.* » (Marxists.org). In this thesis, which moreover is inconsistent with the rest of the text, Lenin was trying clumsily to explain how class consciousness is not the direct product of the clash between employers and workers on the workplaces, but rather a political expression of shock in society between the bourgeois class and the working class. We must take into account that the polemic between Lenin and the Economists in which they worshiped spontaneity and took the workplace as center of gravity of the class struggle, which obviously made them closer to the trade unions and reformists of Western Europe. Lenin opposed the Economists the eminently political character of the class struggle. So even if he was wrong in taking the Kautsky thesis, Lenin was still right against the Economists.

This kautskist thesis has two main weaknesses. It separates socialism and the proletariat. To this, Rosa Luxemburg responded masterly : « *The class struggle is known to be not a social democratic invention that can be arbitrarily set aside for a period of time whenever it may seem convenient to do so. The proletarian class struggle is older than the social democracy, is an elementary product of class society. It flamed up all over Europe when capitalism first came into power. The modern proletariat was not led by the social democracy into the class struggle. On the contrary the international social democratic movement was called into being by the class struggle to bring a conscious aim and unity into the various local and scattered fragments of the class struggle.*¹⁶ » (*The Junius*

16 .

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/junius/index>.

Pamphlet, Rosa Luxemburg, 1915) (*Marxists.org*) Then it takes completely upside down the issue of intellectuals towards communism. Yet Marx and Engels had already resolved the question simply : « *Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.* » (Communist Manifesto). In the Manifesto, Marx and Engels accept and encourage the idea of bourgeois leaving their class to put themselves at the service of the proletariat and its historical movement. Instead, Kautsky says that the historical movement of the proletariat would be in fact a doctrine invented by enlightened bourgeois.

With a brief reminder of some workers' struggles in Russia, Lenin poses a fundamental principle of the understanding of consciousness from the Marxist point of view. « *This shows that the “spontaneous element”, in essence, represents nothing more nor less than. consciousness in an embryonic form.* » (What is to Be Done). There are two currents within Marxism which never managed to assimilate this lesson: the councilist and substitutionist currents. The first current worships spontaneity as a state of purity that a class party could just taint and spoil. In this, that theory condemns the militants to passivity and impotence in the class struggle. Lenin speaks in *What has to be done?* of queuisme, that is to say, to put themselves in the tail of the movement. Meanwhile, the substitutionist current swears only by consciousness, which only the party has. It will even assert, in its Bordigist caricature, that the revolution will be the act of an unconscious mass whose conscience will happen only afterwards, in the communist paradise. It is the only party that makes the revolution. The two streams are the reverse of the same coin in that they are not able to use the Marxist method to understand class consciousness. Their fault is to think in absolute instead of using dialectics. Indeed as Lenin said, the spontaneous emergence of class consciousness in the proletariat is only an embryonic form of a more developed and finished class consciousness. And it is precisely the political role of revolutionaries to promote and intervene in the process that sees the passage of the « spontaneous » to « conscious » in the rest of the proletariat. In short, it is the class that makes the revolution, but it is the party that gives it the political capacity.

The Councilist and Anarchist currents often refer wrongly to Lenin's position as elitism, the party becoming for them a strata above the proletariat. On the contrary, according to Lenin, the most revolutionary fraction of the proletariat must systematically organize and work to elevate the least revolutionary and least politicized fraction of the proletariat, through the class struggle, at the level of revolutionaries. « *This fact proves that our very first and most pressing duty is to help to train working-class*

revolutionaries who will be on the same level in regard to Party activity as the revolutionaries from amongst the intellectuals (we emphasise the words “in regard to Party activity”, for, although necessary, it is neither so easy nor so pressingly necessary to bring the workers up to the level of intellectuals in other respects). Attention, therefore, must be devoted principally to raising the workers to the level of revolutionaries; it is not at all our task to descend to the level of the “working masses” as the Economists wish to do, or to the level of the “average worker” as Svoboda desires to do. » (What is to Be Done?). A conception of the party whose duties is to extend and raise class consciousness can not be credibly described as elitism. In this sense, the party is not a political elite. Rather, it provides political leadership in the working class.

The Bolshevik party adopted and practiced Lenin's position of *What has to be done?* on the party and consciousness. This position contributed to make the Bolsheviks in the early 20th century the leaders of the radical left in the international social democracy alongside, among others, the Dutch Tribunists, the German IKD and Spartacus League and the abstentionist fraction of the Italian Socialist Party. Was it not also Rosa Luxemburg stating at the end of her article on the Russian Revolution that : « *In Russia, the problem could only be posed. It could not be solved in Russia. And in this sense, the future everywhere belongs to “Bolshevism.”* » (*Marxists.org*) Similarly, Pannekoek, who however later became a prominent representative of the Councilist current, at that time was "more Bolshevik than Lenin" : « *But the party has taught them that desperate outbursts on the part of individuals or individual groups are pointless, and that success can only be achieved through collective, united, organised action. It has disciplined the masses and restrained them from frittering away their revolutionary activity fruitlessly. But this, of course, is only the one, negative side of the party's function; it must simultaneously show in positive terms how these energies can be set to work in a different, productive manner, and lead the way in doing so. The masses have, so to speak, made over part of their energy, their revolutionary purpose, to the organised collectivity, not so that it shall be dissipated, but so that the party can put it to use as their collective will. The initiative and potential for spontaneous action which the masses surrender by doing so is not in fact lost, but re-appears elsewhere and in another form as the party's initiative and potential for spontaneous action; a transformation of energy takes place, as it were.* » (*RoW #4*) This high political homogeneity, while not perfect, will be the basis of the formation of the 3rd International and will only be compromised later when the reflux of the world revolution will cause the first dissents from the 20s to the 30s.

The Communist International

The 3rd International was formed on the basis of the

international Socialist Lefts socialisms who refused the treason of the center and the right of social democracy during the 1st World War. In this, and under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution, the 3rd International restored the revolutionary program of the proletariat against revisionism and reformism of the 2nd International.

In its Theses on the role of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution, the 3rd International took over the basic concepts established in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 : « *The Communist Party is a part of the working class, namely, the most advanced, most class-conscious, and hence most revolutionary part. By a process of natural selection the Communist Party is formed of the best, most class-conscious, most devoted and far-sighted workers. The Communist Party has no interests other than the interests of the working class as a whole. The Communist Party is differentiated from the working class as a whole by the fact that it has a clear view of the entire historical path of the working class in its totality and endeavours, at every bend in this road, to defend the interests not of separate groups or trades, but of the working class as a whole. The Communist Party is the organisational and political lever which the most advanced section of the working class uses to direct the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses along the right road*¹⁷ . » (http://www.quinterna.org/lingue/english/historical_en/theses_role_comparty.htm).

In short, nothing new compared to the Manifesto, except that the International clearly established that the class party is not outside the proletariat, which was already implicit in the Manifesto, but is the most conscious fraction within the proletariat.

With the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 appears the new form of proletarian political power: the workers' councils. These will appear in situations of dual power where bourgeois parliaments are discredited and assemblies from the streets and workplaces are formed as workers' power against the bourgeois power. Obviously the bourgeoisie did everything to legalize the councils and make them non-revolutionary. Normally, the soldiers of this legalization was precisely the social-democracy, yesterday's reformist and today's counter-revolutionaries. The International adopted a very important thesis which is actually an adaptation of *What has to be done?* on class consciousness on the situation of workers' councils. *In order that the soviets may be able to achieve their historical tasks, a strong Communist Party is essential, a party which does not simply "adapt" itself to the soviets, but is able to ensure that the soviets do not "adapt" themselves to the bourgeoisie and to white-guard social-democracy, a party which through its fractions in the soviets is able to make them follow it.* (http://www.quinterna.org/lingue/english/historical_en/theses_role_comparty.htm).

17 . Party and Class, Communist Party of Italy, 1921 (http://www.quinterna.org/lingue/english/historical_en/theses_role_comparty.htm).

[es_role_comparty.htm](#)) As Lenin wanted to raise the proletariat to the level of consciousness of the class party, the International worked to raise the workers' councils at the level of consciousness of the same party.

The Communist Left

The Communist Left took up the torch from the tradition of the struggle of the social democratic Left against Revisionism. Like Lenin, Luxemburg and Pannekoek before the war, the Communist Left defended the importance of a party doctrine based on a final goal, communist society, with revolutionary means. This consciousness of the final goals and the means to achieve is actually the class consciousness that the party must be the most advanced expression on the political level. « *It is not simply to edify the masses, and even less to exhibit an intrinsically pure and perfect party, but in fact to obtain the best in the actual process. As we shall see later, it is by systematic propaganda and proselytism and especially active participation in social struggles, to shift a growing number of workers from the terrain of partial struggles for immediate interests to the terrain of the organic and united struggle for the communist revolution. But it is only when a similar continuity of program and leadership exists in the Party that it is possible not only to overcome the reluctance of the proletariat to trust it, but to channel and to more quickly and effectively use the new energies conquered in communal thought and action to achieve this unity of the movement which is an indispensable condition of the revolution* » (Thesis de Rome translated by us). It's definitely in the "Italian" current of the Communist Left that we find the clearest and most correct conception of class consciousness and the party / class relation. « *A party is living when live a doctrine and a method of action. A party is a political school of thought and simultaneously a fighting organization. The first feature is a fact of consciousness, the second is a fact of will, specifically an effort toward a goal.* » (idem)

The Italian left was right to put emphasize on the political nature of class consciousness. A good example of this important notion is in the controversy surrounding the Spanish war within the Communist Left between *Bilan* and the Union Communiste. The latter criticized the Left Fraction of the Italian Communist Party publishing *Bilan* because they denied any revolutionary character in the Spanish civil war. Among the factors justifying their position, contained the absence of a class party. So the Communist Union asserted, for good controversy, that *Bilan's* position was "not party = no revolution." On the contrary *Bilan* position was based on a political tradition it was trying to preserve against the current. Commenting thesis # 1 on the party of the Communist International, the Italian Left had already affirmed « *that one cannot even speak of a class unless a minority of this class tending to organise itself into a political party has come into existence* » (Party and Class, 1921). Considering that the party is the most conscious and revolutionary fraction of

the working class, if there is no tendency towards the constitution of the party in the working class, it means that there is no progress in consciousness. We can not talk about a revolutionary situation since consciousness does not exist and the revolution must be a conscious act. In Spain, there were some comrades defending revolutionary positions around Grandizo Munis, but they were drowned in the stinking swamp of Republican and anti-fascist national union. The lack of discernment of Union Communiste has pushed these comrades to seek revolutionaries in Spain where there was not it did not exist, that is to say in the Left of the POUM, the class collaboration party by excellency.

It's in the journal called *Internationalisme* published by the Communist Left of France that we finally find the highest synthesis during this historical period of the relation between party / consciousness / class. As we said above, there are two bad fundamental understandings of class consciousness within the Communist Left: Councilism for which it is only the class that exists and Bordigism for which only the party really counts. For the GCF : « the Party does not substitute itself for the class. It does not call for "confidence" in the bourgeois meaning of the word, but rather sets out as a delegation to which the fate and the destiny of society is entrusted. Its unique historical function is to act towards enabling the class to acquire its

own consciousness of its mission, of its goals and means which are the basis of its revolutionary action» (Party and Class.)

Class consciousness is the knowledge of the ultimate goal of the class struggle and the means to get there. This knowledge is not the prerogative of a layer of "revolution specialists", but is rather the historical experience of the working class that the party crystallizes into a political program. **The proletariat becomes politicized in the very process of class struggle, the class party being both product and factor this politicization.** « *Political revolution is a primary condition for a socialist orientation of the economy and society. Thus, socialism can only be brought about through the consciousness of the aims of the movement, as a consciousness of its realization and a conscious will for action. Socialist consciousness precedes and conditions the revolutionary action of the class* ». *Socialist revolution is the beginning of history where humanity is called upon to dominate the productive forces that it has already strongly developed, and it is from this domination that socialist revolution arises* » (idem). The last sentence is important. It says that Communist militants must be organized before the revolution to be involved in the front line of the revolutionary struggle.

Robin

October 9th 2016 in Montreal : Open Meeting of the IGCL 2pm at the La Flèche rouge bookstore, 3232 Ontario East

We hold regular open meetings in Montréal and the Toronto region for any reader, sympathizer or militant who desires to meet and debate with us. They are announced on our Web Site : www.igcl.org.

The comrades can also write to our email address, intleftcom@gmail.com, for any encounter. Up to date, we don't organize open meeting in France but one can contact us to the same address in order to organize any encounter or meeting in Paris.

Pamphlets of IGKlasbatalo and the IFICC (orders at [intleftcom@gmail](mailto:intleftcom@gmail.com))

Student Struggle and Assemblies of Neighbourhood (Internationalist Communists - Klasbatalo)

La dégénérescence de l'IC : le PCF (1924-1927) (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French)

Groupe des Travailleurs Marxistes (Mexique, 1938) (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French and Spanish)

La question de la guerre (1935) (International Fraction of the ICC, only in French)

Morale prolétarienne, lutte de classes et révisionisme (IGCL from the IFICC, only in French and Spanish)

Unions Against the Working Class (1976, reprinted from the ICC Pamphlet).

Internal Life of the IGCL

General Meeting of the IGCL – July 2016

We publish here after large extracts of the activities report, written April 2016, which has been presented, discussed and finally adopted at the 1st General Meeting of our group since its constitution in November 2013. Why do we publish an internal report? In what can this interest the working class and its most militant and conscious minorities?

Our group stands that any working class struggle, as limited or isolated it may be, is a political struggle since, as K. Marx and F. Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, "every class struggle is a political struggle". Any struggle confronts at one or another level, particularly in our times, the capitalist state and its bourgeois political forces whether they are its right of left parties, its unions, its media propaganda, its police and its class justice. Now, because it implies the slogans of capitalism's destruction, the working class insurrection and the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is the confrontation with the capitalist state, the perspective of communism actually provides the means and the political weapons for the class fights whatever are their level because "the relation which links the class to its communist consciousness is the same as the one which links the class to the future exercise of its dictatorship" (*Communist Consciousness*, the ICP-Battaglia comunista, 1978, in *Contro venti e maree*). As main expressions of the proletariat's historical class consciousness and specific bearers of the communist perspective, the communist groups – and the party when it does exist – are the most capable to fully take on this political dimension of the class fight and to lead the greater number of workers to it. Actually, it is for taking on this task of political leadership or political vanguard that the proletariat, as historical class, makes them appear and that, all along its struggle, it favours the emergence of forces which will set up its class party. The permanent political dimension of the class fight leads to and push for the party's constitution. Here is why the present communist groups which strongly work for the revolutionaries' regroupment, have nothing to hide to their class. All the more since they are confronted with the same problems and difficulties – indeed at a particular level – that the class as a whole is confronted with.

So, **and particularly in the historical period of massive confrontations between the classes which is opening**, to set up and develop a communist group is an experience that we must share. We must attempt to get interesting in it the maximum of comrades and militant workers who do not still dare to come closer to these organizations. As the working class, the revolutionaries confront with the difficulties and conditions of the present time: mainly to scepticism in regards with the revolutionary capacities of the proletariat and to the communist perspective; and to the democratic illusions, to the cult of individualism and to the contempt and rejection of the serious, argued and direct debates. It is mainly to these two weaknesses which affect the working class as a whole and its revolutionary minorities, that our group had to struggle in its own ranks as well as in its intervention since its constitution.

The discussion on our activities have been at the centre of the works of the general meeting even though we also dealt with other points like the international situation. The discussions and the comrades' interventions have expressed an additional degree of political clarification and agreements within our ranks on the balance-sheet of our activities and on our orientations. Certainly, we had not forces enough to draw up an activities Resolution which could have synthesized the discussion and pointed out the agreements which we came to. Nevertheless, there were no disagreement on the balance-sheet and the general orientations that the report put forwards and it has been adopted by all even though some slight differences or questionings remain on such or such secondary point. The internal orientations in regards with the equilibrium "internal life- external intervention" and with the balance-sheet of the journal, its "readability" and its diffusion, have been endorsed. The general orientations in regards to the present historical course of the struggle of classes and to the Proletarian Camp – the Left Communist groups – which had been defined at the 2013 Conference have been confirmed by the meeting and actualized in function to the development of the situation – the report presents also these elements shortly.

In conclusion, and whether the months to come will confirm or not our first impressions, for the time being this meeting appears to us as the product and a factor of homogeneity of the group and a moment for that it can realize at best its future activities – in particular to actively and centrally work for the regroupment of the communist camp and the struggle for the party.

The IGCL.

Activities Report for the IGCL General Meeting

A precision first : this report can't be and don't seek to be exhaustive. An activities report mainly aims at two things: drawing a balance-sheet and perspectives for the period to come. Drawing a balance-sheet does not mean establishing two columns, one positive, the other one negative, and making the balance. The balance-sheet is not in itself but in relation to the development of the world historical situation and the main milieu in which we are, the revolutionary milieu in general and the proletarian camp in particular. And all this in relation to our basic principles, our political orientations and our forces. Have we respected our principles (our Platform) and verified its value in face of the historical situation ? Have we put forwards our political orientations (defined by our understanding of the historical situation, see our [Thesis on the International Situation](#)¹⁸) and have we adapted, indeed modified, if the situation required it ? Have we utilized at best our forces in regards with our principles and orientations as well with the necessity of the general situation ? **In short, have we respected and developed the mandate that the 2013 Conference of constitution had given us ?**

Certainly we won't be able to have a report on the international situation which would enable us to come back on the last 2 years and a half since the constitution of the group and the adoption of our Thesis on the international situation. We don't have forces enough. Nevertheless, this balance-sheet is going to be determined by the fact the reporter (attempting to take into account what, according to him, should be shared by all the comrades) considers that :

- the development of the world situation has confirmed the general validity of our framework of analysis (the Thesis) : Capitalism's decadence, alternative revolution or war and the conditions in which it is increasingly posed through the notion of historical course, economic crisis and imperialist rivalries exacerbating, bourgeois economic and political offensive, proletariat's combativity and limits mainly **due to the absence of revolutionary perspective, indeed under the form of "simple hope", in its ranks** (in other terms: weakness of the consciousness of the class in the great proletarian masses);

- in relation to the Thesis dated July 2013, the situation has nevertheless developed: the relation economic crisis-imperialist rivalries has become more and more direct, the particular dynamic of the working class struggle opened in 2008 has died out precisely in 2013 (the "Greek" dynamic as potential international focal point) and a more aggressive ideological and political offensive of the bourgeoisie at the international level against the proletariat opened up since January 2015 with the Paris attacks which opened « a new period ». Crisis and war are going to become direct factors of consciousness in the proletarian ranks and revival of the revolutionary aspiration ;

- finally, the contradictory dynamics which go through the Proletarian Camp and the revolutionary camp have deepened: hesitations of the International Communist Tendency (ICT www.leftcom.org) for assuming its historical task, subsistence

and even small waking up of the "Bordiguist" groups (for the "partidist" forces), lack of confidence and hesitations of the new elements, groups, circles which regularly rise up and disappear, growing decay of the ICC¹⁹, maintenance of an anti-organization milieu of "Councilism" kind; all this aggravated by the isolation of the revolutionary groups from their class as an expression and factor of the generalized lost of consciousness of the communist perspective.

Of course, this rapid balance validating our general 2013 orientations – we think all the comrades will share it – does not take away possible discussions, clarifications, indeed nuances or disagreement on such or such particular point. We think about the question of the main axis of the imperialist confrontations such as comrade S. has raised it after the Russian intervention in Syria. We think about the understanding of the historical course which has been the subject of various and constant discussions and clarifications within our rank all along these years. We think about the regular questionings on the role of the ICT as "pole of regroupment". There certainly are others.

We note three fundamental elements which have determined the dynamics in progress of the international situation since 2013 from which we can evaluate, positively according to the reporter, the capacities of our group for acknowledging, taking position, and even re-adapting its orientations :

- the exhaustion of the dynamic of struggle in Greece (July 2013) that the group has been able to take into account quite quickly (see *RG#1*, introduction to the Thesis, and above all *RG#2*);
- the attacks of January 2015 in Paris opening up a new period of massive confrontations;
- the hesitation of the ICT in front of the constitution of the IGCL (summer 2014) and the adaptation of our orientation towards it²⁰.

To read or re-read the issues of *Revolution or War* with the leaflets and communiques give a quite faithful image of the IGCL's reality and dynamic. Thus we propose to begin by the journal for establishing our balance-sheet.

1) The Journal and Our Leaflet

"Consequently, the IGCL decided to develop a printed international journal, Revolution or War – to be published initially on a semi-annual basis – and circulated as widely as possible so as to conduct the group's general work on a regular basis and to develop a political presence internationally and locally, when and where it's needed" (Resolution on the foundation of the IGCL, November 2013 Conference).

In first place, the group has been able to fulfil the mandate given by the conference in regards to the establishment and the realization of a regular biannual publication in two languages. As well as the setting up (with comrade Ldo's help) of the web site which enables us also to insure a

18 . <http://igcl.org/Theses-on-the-Historical-Situation>.

19 . International Communist Current.

20 . Mainly due to the difficulties with the IWG, the Canadian group of the ICT, at first hostile to the setting up of another group of the Communist Left in Montreal.

reduced Spanish version and the publication of most of our leaflets and communiques in this language. The journal has never suffered delays and we estimate that its political content expresses the richness and the capacities of the IGCL. Few are the revolutionary and even communist groups which succeed to insure a regular publication. **To this success**, we must also add the quality of our web site and our Facebook pages which enables us to make know too – besides the militant diffusions inescapably limited – our immediate statements by leaflet or communiques. Certainly, there might be points to improve.

The regularity and the frequency of the journals and the updatings on the web site already say a lot about the strength and the dynamic of the group. From this point of view, **the group has fulfilled the mandate that the conference had given it.**

The other part of the mandate in regards with the publications deals with the political content and the orientations put forwards. The reporter thinks that the journal has responded as it should to the situation (in accordance to its frequency) :

- in relation to the development of the situation and the immediate events of international importance, the editorials and the leaflets-communiques have succeeded to take into account, sometimes at the last moment for some editorials of the journal (which expresses our capacity of reaction), the breaks and the ruling events in the situation: the war in Ukraine (February 2014), the strikes in Germany-Belgium (October 2014), the attacks in Paris (January 2015), the world economic crisis (fall of the BRICS) and the political meaning of Syriza in Greece (February 2015), on the waves of migrants in September 2015, on the new Paris attacks (November 2015), on the proletarian alternative after the attacks in Brussels and the media campaign which followed it (March 2016). Beyond these immediate responses, the journal in great part focused on the denunciation of bourgeois democracy put forwards in most of the events as central element of the bourgeois ideological mystification in general and more particularly with the aim of imperialist war;

- in relation to the revolutionary and proletarian camp, we have also been able to take position on the main events: International Communist Current (ICC)'s internal crisis, its congresses, International Communist Tendency (ICT)'s public meetings in Canada, General Assembly of *Battaglia Comunista*, as well as regularly republishing texts and articles of the ICT or still of the bordiguist PCint;

- as public debate, the journal has provided orientations and elements of reflections on the historical course, on the method of analysis of the class struggle and the imperialist rivalries, on the democratic mystifications and the Internet's one, on the elections, on the ICC and ICT platforms, on the question of the Party (Postcap Collective Russian group), on Anarchism. We must insist on our willingness to open the journal and our debates to the whole Proletarian Camp and to assume the debates which goes through it. **This is a central orientation that we must maintain and deepen so that we win the maximum of forces of the camp to this tradition unfortunately forgotten and given up due to sectarianism.**

In brief, we consider that the journal and our interventions have not only responded to the general situation – and sometime local and immediate ones when we could – but also

expressed:

- the vitality of our group and the intensity of its internal life ;
- its openness to the immediate situation and the other revolutionary groups – particularly those of the Communist Left – so endeavouring to the fight for the Party;
- its willingness to intervene in the class struggles and, above all, to develop its capacity and its role of political leadership at the general level, historical, and at the immediate, in the struggles.

Later, we can consider that the journal has put forwards the political positions and orientations that the 2013 Conference had defined. In particular, it has clearly set itself within the "partidist" camp while being able to defend the need and the perspective for overcoming sectarianism, expressing the unity of the Communist Left and the necessity for "overcoming" the 1945 split between the two historical currents represented by the ex-IBRP (ICT today) and the ICC of the years 1970-1980.

This positive balance of the work for the journal takes off nothing to the weaknesses and lacks which, certainly, would deserve to be noticed and discussed. It belongs to the discussion of this report for the general meeting (and thus to the comrades) to raise the weaknesses or possible lacks **after having pronounced on the general balance-sheet which is drawn here on the journal. Actually, depending of the agreement or not with this balance-sheet, the discussion of the weaknesses and the lacks won't take the same political meaning.** In particular, criticisms which the reporter does not share, have been expressed on the "readability" of the journal, on "the audience we address to" (during the discussion on the necessity of an "agitation leaflet"). If this critic should be maintained, it would matter to know in which framework we discuss it: the one of a general agreement with the positive balance-sheet we draw in this report or rather in the framework of an opposition to this one. In that case, the discussion would have to focus on the understanding of the intervention of a communist group and its publications.

Thus we will ask the general meeting of the group to state on this balance-sheet of the journal (and of the interventions by leaflets and communiques, included our intervention through the web site). **Has the mandate that the 2013 Conference had given, been fulfilled?**

2) The Internal Life of the Group

"We are building up a group from two nucleus and militants whose histories and experiences are different. And we have to take into account this situation that we'll have to overcome through the improvement of our homogeneity and unity. The group is formally set up but its political unity remains a process" (Report of Paris Discussion, November 13th 2014).

We can believe that the internal life of our group has gone through two moments or periods:

- the first goes from the Conference until December 2014;
- then from December 2014 until our days (by the time the reporter is writing).

We can wonder : is the "small crisis" that we have being passing through late January with two comrades' joint dismissals representing a new step? Fortunately, one of them

has quickly come back about his decision. On the other hand, the other comrade remains deaf to our calls and he does not participate any more to the group's activities. If we can believe that the elements of an internal crisis, or rather of a collective demoralization, appeared at that time, the reporter thinks they have been reduced quite quickly by the reaction of the whole group and its members: after a time of confusion, indeed a rising demoralization amongst all of us (no doubt at different degrees), because the concomitant announcement of both dismissals, the majority of the comrades could react (fraternal mails but firms at the political level) and, rapidly, one comrade could go back over his decision. The whole comrades of Montreal and Paris overcame the demoralization effects (at the personal level because friendship relations as well as political) of the other comrade's withdrawal until today. Further more, to what extent have scepticism, or the lost of political confidence, about the revolutionary and communist perspective amongst the great proletarian masses which directly affects the whole Proletarian Camp, played in these dismissals?

On the other hand, it is clear that the last withdrawal weakens considerably the group. Not so much because we would have two arms less for the diffusion (even though his intervention to the ICT public meeting has been a strong moment of our fight for the regroupment and the party), but essentially because his dynamism and his reflections have always impelled the group, its debates and its reflection: various advances and clarifications that the group has realized – and with it the militants – were thanks to the initiative of the comrade. Contrary to what he could said rapidly in such or such mail, the questions the comrade raised, were not a "lost of time" but a "saving of time" if we consider that:

- the comrade's ideas – as all comrades' ideas – are not his "owns", coming out from his own brain, but a particular expression at a given moment of positions and questions which exists within the class – contrary to what the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideologies don't stop delivering on us;
- soon or later, these questions would have been raised under one form or another and, quite often, when they are silenced and put under the carpet, they reappear in a period of crisis or huge intervention which needs an urgent response.

At the time we are writing (April 25th), the comrade remains silent and refuses to discuss with the group. We don't have to rush even more since the comrade can find himself in a personal situation of demoralization. Nevertheless, we'll have to meet him, try to convince him of not breaking any links, indeed to win him to the idea that his place is amongst us.

The Political "Battle" for the Discussion Reports

Despite the heterogeneity due to the different histories and experiences of the two nucleus, the dynamic and the enthusiasm of the comrades that the Conference had made arise, enabled the Montreal section to take the decision to hold **weekly meetings** since December 2013 and write **reports of discussion** of each meeting. **The fact the group could get itself this pace of meetings and reports has been the main vector of our internal political life**, of our debates and our collective political clarifications. Sometimes, they suffer from difficulties due to the written transcripts

"afterwards" of oral intervention. These often intense debates, mostly contradictory, have been accompanied with some personal tensions and recriminations between Montreal and Paris. We can say that the group has really integrated and understood this "method of functioning" after a year. It is comrade S. who summarizes very well our difficulties on this matter and who positively settles the debate:

“ Actually, I believe that we have a difficulty to understand us well (as says your report, "we don't speak the same language"). The last report of France is very critical. Nevertheless, it is not only a question of speaking the same language; I also believe that we don't have the same assessment of the reality. Let's say things as they are: for the ICK, the constitution of the IGCL represents a great leap forwards in terms of militant and organizational practices. We don't have the experience of the ex-comrades of the ICC. And, for the FICL [Fraction of the International Communist Left], the IGCL may represent the contrary: a kind of step backward to the past for Jonas and Juan.

*By this, I'm not saying that the IGCL constitutes an involution for the nucleus in France... but a new dynamic or organizational practice they must fit to: things don't go as quickly on the Canadian side since we don't have 40 years of discussions and debates in our luggage and certainly not the same homogeneity as in France. Where you see real threats to the possible explosion of the group, we continue to see leaps forwards in terms of reinforcement of our cohesion and internal life. **In all the years the ICK had existed, we never had so much debates than in one year with the IGCL.** The most important discussion we had was at the beginning of the coming closer to the FICL: the "Contribution à un état des lieux de la Gauche communiste" [only in French²¹] and its Critical Review...²². It is thus obvious that we don't understand the disagreements the same way. At least comrades, we have debates and are able to confront them.*

Now, regarding the report and the questions raised.

For me, the reports of discussion are necessary and represent the motor on which the group must base itself to go on ” (S.'s letter of December 3rd 2014).

Thus, at that level, the mandate given by the Conference (during the discussion on the Statutes and on the development of the political internal life) has been fulfilled.

We have to notice that we have learnt also to debate from what is written in the reports while we know an intervention can't be badly transcribed and that it can be corrected afterwards. But the interest of the group is to debate at the risk of attributing to a comrade words or ideas he has not really expressed (at the risk of provoking personal tensions too) and even if it means "polarizing" the debates so that we can draw the maximum of the questions raised (keeping moderation of course and by focusing on the main questions).

Nevertheless, the isolation of various comrades (added to the very strong weakening of Jonas' physical capacities) and the reduction of members in the Montreal section make more difficult the permanent effort to maintain the weekly pace for

21 . http://fractioncommuniste.org/fra/bci04/bci04_4.php.

22 . <http://igcl.org/Critical-Review-of-a-Contribution>.

feeding the internal life and debates. The risk of loosening is permanent. As well as the difficulty to make live the meetings through the preparation in advance. This also needs individual efforts which require not so much "more work" but a constant preoccupation. It was what comrade Steve's letter on the "travail artisanal" ["amateurish, or primitiveness, methods"] of December 14th 2014, was rightly recalling.

Thus, we can't consider that the weekly meetings and reports are a definitive gain: both remain a daily and permanent fight of each member to make live our collective body. In particular, the isolated members must attempt to take position regularly, every week if possible, by a writing, on the reports sent by Montreal. Not only this must enable them to break their isolation and sustain their political reflection, but also feed the life and the debates of the meetings of Montreal nucleus. The reporter believes that **this collective and individual struggle for sustaining and reinforcing this pace on the basis of the weekly Montreal meetings is a priority for the period to come.**

The Utilization of the Social Networks and the Internal Functioning

The first debate which has really crystallized the political disagreements linked to our different past experiences and which has provoked personal tensions as well, has been about the utilization of Facebook and the social networks. In front of the strong – and above all increasing – reticence in Paris, the tensions have increased all the more since the Montreal comrades were all almost permanent users, at personal level, of Facebook. Soon, the fact that the comrades were not clearly distinguishing the personal dimension and the political dimension in "their" Facebook not only revealed disagreements on the understanding of the relation militant life-personal life for the militants but also on the internal functioning: actually, it is the expression of the group as a whole which predominates and the individual political expressions (and initiatives) can't be but under its control and from the internal process of political homogeneity. This "control" is the only means to guarantee at best that the personal initiatives be the most "positive" possible.

Moreover, a debate emerged also around a vision according to which the social networks could also be means for the spreading of the working class struggles.

Finally, our behaviour and utilization of the social networks has been clarified and settled by the group who adopted the position expressed in the article of the journal #3²³.

The Political "Battle" against the Concessions to Democratism and Individualism within our Ranks

Behind this difficult and fundamental debate for the future of the group and its development, the thoughtless utilization of Facebook and its mode of instantaneous, immediate and emotional communication without... collective and methodical reflection has revealed in our ranks concessions to

bourgeois democratic and individualist ideologies whose internet has become one of the main vectors.

The episode of the personal, but political, exchange (in successive posts) on Facebook with K. who had just resigned from the ICT in which one comrade let himself drawn, has been a very important moment, we do think, in the fight against the democratic and individualist illusions within our ranks which allowed the whole comrades to acknowledge where concessions to these ideologies could drive us to and to reinforce our political unity. **In this occasion, we think that the group has taken a big step strengthening its unity and its political homogeneity.**

The Question of the Intervention

We have already mentioned the proposal made in November 2014 to make regular "agitation leaflets". It matters to come back on the arguments which were put forwards at the time. The argumentation for this proposal was actually developing a criticism of the journal or, at least, a different conception, between the two original nucleus of the group and a different conception of the intervention within the working class:

"It is a journal which addresses above all to the regroupment. Then, because selling this kind of journal in a demonstration, to proletarians, is a little silly; we utilize concepts in general which can't be mastered by the workers. The comrade proposes that we rather publish, eventually, a leaflet of agitation – a little like the IWG does – to intervene in the struggles. Thus, in stead of publishing more often a theoretical journal which addresses to the regroupment, we could carry on publishing the journal twice a year with articles to publish through leaflet for intervening in the demos " (Montreal Report, September 27th 2014).

We can wonder in what degree this vision carried then by the comrades corresponded to the mandate that the Conference had given to the journal:

"Consequently, the IGCL decided to develop a printed international journal, Revolution or War – to be published initially on a semi-annual basis – and circulated as widely as possible so as to conduct the group's general work on a regular basis and to develop a political presence internationally and locally, when and where it's needed. » (pt 2 of the Resolution on the constitution of the IGCL).

Immediately and after this debate, we have adopted the possibility to accompany the diffusion of the journal whether with an article on a leaflet paper that we give or with an existing leaflet or communiqué. But to our knowledge, the discussion around these arguments have never really developed. According to the reporter, they are to be rejected (see the Paris Report, September 30th 2014) and they reveal a different vision of the journal and more widely of the intervention in the "great masses of the working class". In particular, we don't have an "individualist" vision of the class and of the intervention within its ranks. It is not a sum of individuals but a social, exploited and revolutionary class which overcomes and "transcends" the individuals who conform it. In this sense, we don't speak, nor the journal, to a particular category of the class but to the class as a whole.

We have also dealt in many occasions with the relation

23 . *Bourgeois Democracy, Internet... and the So-called Individuals' Equality* (<http://igcl.org/Bourgeois-Democracy-Internet-and>).

between internal life and intervention. Juan, alone in Paris, has raised this question in terms of priority according to the moments and the immediate (and local) situation: favouring the internal life to the immediate intervention for developing the general and historical intervention of the group. Favouring or making a priority one of the two terms does not mean ignoring the other term of course, nor excluding that the relation between both can reverse in some occasions. In various occasions, the comrades have expressed the fear, even the criticism, that this vision make that the group could withdraw into itself and live in isolation.

It will matter that this discussion develops from now to the General Meeting so that we can advance in our collective understanding on intervention and on the orientation to give to the journal.

Despite these differences of conceptions, we think that, globally, the group and its militants have been able to mobilize for the public interventions when they were necessary and possible (diffusion of the press and leaflets, public meetings, speech interventions, etc.). It is obvious that there are failings and that we could do "more". Distinguishing what belongs to "objective" limits in terms of militant forces and collective, and individual, availabilities on one side and, on the other, what belongs to political hesitations, doubts, side steps, individual and collective, in front of the mobilization and the effort that the interventions represent, is necessary even though it is difficult. Most of the comrades being alone in their city – included in Montreal, the comrades can intervene collectively only rarely, it seems –, we often are let on our own which makes still more difficult the mobilization for intervention. From this point of view, **the writing of reports of intervention (at least oral in the Montreal meetings, written everywhere else) must become a regular practice so that the whole comrades can both state on the intervention realized, support the comrade who made it, and reinforce his own militant confidence as well as the confidence in the capacity of the group as such, often through a single militant, to intervene correctly and with determination.**

Nevertheless, we could mobilize during working class struggles and street demonstrations which were taking place where we live. And so we could distribute the journal and the leaflets. It was the same on the occasion of the public meetings of political groups. In particular, the quality of our interventions to the ICT public meetings in Canada have certainly been a very important moment for our intervention and for our relations vis-a-vis that organization.

Remains the question of the sales of the journal which are weak. Certainly, no doubt that the whole communist publications under paper form are more and more badly sold (see the General Assembly of BC²⁴). We don't develop here on the objective conditions on which we can't do much. Even so, the effort of diffusion, still more difficult, is essential for being able to develop a political presence and gather around us. Do we make enough efforts for distributing the journal? It is a permanent collective and individual fight which requires for the essential our political and militant convictions: to understand the political meaning of the development of a

political presence of which the distribution of the press and the leaflets are a component – the others being the public meetings, the encounters with contacts, etc...

4) The Development of the Proletarian Camp and our Intervention

“ Similarly, the IGCL has associated itself with the political agreement arrived at by the CI-K and FICL in their debate on the state of the proletarian camp, defining our analysis of the camp as well as our intervention in it. In particular, the aims of our interventions are to participate in the struggle for the consolidation of communist forces in order to constitute the world party of the proletariat. Today, the fight for the communist party requires that we push both for consolidation and polarization around the Internationalist Communist Tendency and as well to fight against the manifestations of opportunism and sectarianism within the camp, especially against apolitical and 'anti-party' tendencies. “ (Resolution on the Foundation of the IGCL).

In this report, we consider as assured the comrades' agreement with our analysis and our general orientations such as the text voted by the Conference Critical Review... (RW#3) presents them. Since the Conference, the Proletarian Camp has been passing through two particular moments, both in 2014, and to which we have been directly confronted with: the doubts and hesitations of the ICT in front of the foundation of the IGCL; the last internal crisis of the ICC and its consequences. Both events don't change, according to the reporter, our analysis and our general orientations. On the other hand, they express some changes in the situation which required that we adapt our main orientation; that is the one towards the ICT.

The "Partidists" and the ICT

In a first time, doubts and questionings within our ranks have reappeared on the role of international “pole” of regroupment by the ICT and above all on the concrete intervention we needed to have vis-a-vis this organization. In particular, we had difficulties amongst us to understand that we had not to address ourselves to the IWG – the Canadian group – but to the ICT as a whole as well as looking at our intervention in the long term. It seems to us that this approach has been understood, at least integrated, precisely from our reaction to the August 2014 ICT letter which criticized the constitution of our group. This letter marked a step, negative one, and needed an adaptation of our orientation in regards with the new situation so created. We have decided thus:

- *” to carry on supporting the ICT when it will develop correct statements and interventions (for instance by reproducing its articles, or leaflets, on our web site, even in our public diffusion (...));*
- *(...) to develop **more than before** (than the fractions) our fraternal criticisms – i.e. underlining too our fundamental point of agreement – on theoretical, political, and even "organizational" questions;*
- *to “ firmly and publicly criticized, in relation with our general orientations and priorities of intervention, the positions and the leftist kind "adventures" that the ICT (or*

24 . <http://igcl.org/General-Assembly-of-the-PCInt>.

some of its parts) may develop sometimes²⁵ (...) “ (letter to the ICT, October 15th 2014).

We call the General Meeting to state on this adaptation of our orientation.

Even though the behaviour of the ICT remained fraternal and that it seems to have better understood the seriousness of our intervention since then, our new orientation remains fully topical. **Accordingly, the General Meeting must draw a positive balance-sheet of our intervention in the first period (until October 2014 and our response) as well as since then.**

Within the so-called "Partidist" Camp (besides the ICT), it matters to keep on paying attention to the Bordiguist groups: particularly *Le Prolétaire-Proletarian* (Programme communiste). These groups continue to develop, from and within the framework of their "Bordiguist" programmatic positions, class statements and to set the stakes of the situation in relation to the historical alternative *3rd Imperialist World War or Proletarian Revolution*. Very often on the immediate events, we find ourselves on the same side of the class barricade (see on the "indignados" movement for instance or today "nuit debout"). From this point of view, they carry and claim clearly and strongly the revolutionary perspective.

Furthermore, different groups rise up and disappear at international scale. In the extent of our possibilities (we don't have the capacities for playing the role of pole of international regroupment), we have succeeded to develop some correspondences with such groups or circles. Nevertheless, our effort is certainly insufficient; if only because it is left to a single comrade and is not taking in charge by the whole group as such: **at least, we should define mandates**. But we call the attention of the comrade on a group like Robin Goodfellow which intervenes increasingly and whom we regularly meet. This group which was typically in the "Academic" milieu on Bordiguist basis, now sets itself more and more in working class mobilizations and participates to the debates of the Communist Left.

The ICC and its Internal Crisis

In a first time, the whole comrades pronounced in agreement with the publication of the "Appeal" in front of the internal crisis of the ICC, in agreement with its content and its timing. It is only in a second time that the question of the urgency for publishing it before the supposed date of their Conference has been raised by comrades as well as doubts on its form and content. It will be good that we could make a balance-sheet of this intervention – not in itself vis-a-vis the ICC but because tomorrow we'll find us again facing other situation of the same kind and, above all, which will require urgent responses.

The reporter believes that we were right to publish so rapidly. Not because we could hope some immediate result, that is the rising of a class reaction within its ranks, but because it mattered to alert the whole Proletarian and Revolutionary Camp which could have intervened at its turn, for one part; and for the other, to sabotage the work of the ICC

liquidationists who wanted to make "their own dirty cooking in their corner", in silence, out of sight.

According to the reporter, today, the state of the ICC, its publications, its statements, its activity, the disappearance of entire sections, the cascading dismissals, the demoralization of the last militants, in short its growing state of delinquency, so much comes to justify our Appeal, its content and its timing. Its degeneration and its members' demoralization – expression and product of the former – manifest particularly in the lost of progressive confidence in the proletariat's revolutionary potentialities and whose theory of Decomposition has been, too, the result and then the active factor.

The "Councilist" Sphere

This milieu, whether in the "Anglo-Saxon" area (around libcom web site for instance) or still in the European one (much former ICC members, *Controverses* for instance), don't accept our criticisms, ignores us and even develops a relative political hostility. We keep on believing that it represents today the opportunist Right wing of the Camp, when it is not simply Anarchist excrescences, or close to it. We have not much to hope except a systematic opposition. Very often its members are quite demoralized for their past organizational experiences and have lost confidence in the proletariat up to be enthusiastic towards any novelty like the "Indignados" for later falling back in their lethargy.

Nevertheless, we must notice that there are other councilists who can express dynamics different to the one of the "elders" who are marked by the past. For instance, we can't exclude that in the Anglo-Saxon area, in the United-States or Canada, groups or circles may appear from Councilist positions (Pannekoek) and present a dynamic of clarification and revolutionary regroupment. In Europe, update, these circles are often influenced by "Modernism": the GARAP for instance. However, this is a group which develops a genuine activity in the struggles (whose political content has to be verified up to today) and which participates also to the General Assembly and the Paris "interpro general assembly or committee" ["inter professionnel", that's inter sectors or corporations] and sets itself – for what we could see – on the "good" side of the different barricades.

Towards a Reorganization of the Proletarian Camp

More generally, it would matter, according to our strength, to establish a report of the Revolutionary Camp and of the Proletarian Camp. The historical situation drives to the reflection of the revolutionary minorities and to their responsibility. It tends to make rise up the questions and the contradictions put under the table amongst and within the groups. The present delinquency of the ICC already provokes, and will provoke more and more openly, a void to be filled; as well, the development of the situation and the increasing actuality of the historical stakes cannot but encourage the "Partidist camp" and its main axis, the ICT, to confront the hesitations and doubts that may exist within it, to overcome the rests of sectarianism which still last and to assert still more clearly, that is concretely in the class struggle, the revolutionary and communist perspective before

25 . We were referring at that time to some statements and interventions of the IWG (Canada).

the whole proletariat's eyes. The situation also drives to the rising of new forces and, even, that some already existing, shake themselves out of their torpor (Bordiguist groups) or rise to the heights of present requirements (Robin Goodfellow?).

After decades of (relatively) stable conformation, the Proletarian Camp is passing through a situation which announces and prefigures a reorganization that the historical situation will speed up. **We must be an active factor of this reconfiguration by leading coherently and decisively the struggle for the Party against the Councilist tendencies and the opportunism while setting this struggle in the long run. For this, we must consider the Proletarian Camp and all its organizational components as parts of ourselves. We must consider the internal life of each group also as of our responsibility, as one part of our internal life.**

5) The Debate Underway and to Be Developed

Whether it is at the level of the internal functioning or at the level of the orientations towards the Proletarian Camp, the underlying theoretical and political questionings have been in great part clarified and settled. We can clearly say that the first year of the IGCL has represented a first period of setting up the group and clarification of basic questions indispensable for its regular functioning and without which the group would not have survived very long.

From January 2015, globally, **the debates became quieter** since they increasingly tend to fit within the framework of our political and organizational principles. The period 2013-2014 have seen one single line of confrontation, of opposition, of the debates dividing regularly Montreal and Paris; both still marked by their respective pasts, the ICK and the FICL-IFICC, the particular experience of the comrades in France and the questionings of the comrades from Canada. From 2015 on, the debates and the oppositions don't oppose systematically the two former nucleus and they don't refer any more to questions of political and organizational principles. There, it is a sign of a state of political homogeneity that the group as a whole succeeded to reach after one year. This dynamic of political homogeneity has not slowed down since then. The debates on the historical course, on the analysis of the class struggle, on the imperialist rivalries, the debate on the class consciousness which is just beginning, express particularly the level of political unity that the IGCL has reached.

Nevertheless, and despite its dynamism (and given the permanent bourgeois ideology's pressure), the group remains fragile :

- the demoralizations of comrades are favoured by the weak number of members and their relative isolation. The numerical weakness is an "objective" fact which weakens and which expresses too the fact that the revolutionaries are suffering the weakness of the communist perspective within the proletarian ranks;
- the taking in charge of the debates by the whole comrades and "nucleus" is not assumed enough and, despite an increased collective consciousness, is handicapped by the absence of real section which could be a focus, a central active factor, of the political life of the group;

- as well, the taking in charge of the journal is not collective enough in its political and technical realization as well as in its following and political support.

The reporter believes that it is precisely on the two last points that the group must today focus on and direct its effort on.

Conclusions

It is thus a positive balance-sheet of the activities of the group that this report asks the General Meeting to discuss and to draw. Almost three years after its foundation and despite a relative isolation, few militants, few active sympathizers, our group has imposed itself as full group of the Communist Left and its regular political presence in the Revolutionary Camp, the coherence of its political orientations and its capacity of reaction, brings credit to the political organization and to the Communist Left. Despite our isolation and weak forces, it remains that we are today amongst the few political expressions of the Communist Left in North America and one of its more frequent and regular in Europe. Even better, on various questions and on the occasion of events of the class struggle and of the situation, included of the Proletarian Camp, we find ourselves at the centre of the reaction of the Communist camp and one of its main active factors while assuming, at the scale of our forces, our role of political vanguard of the proletariat vis-a-vis the class as well as the revolutionary camp as a whole. **The mandate that the Conference had given, has been fulfilled well and the journal expresses it clearly.**

Nevertheless, it remains some "objective" fragility due to to the historical situation – to the difficulties of the proletariat to find back the revolutionary path to Communism – and to the particular weaknesses of the Proletarian Camp. It is in this situation and this milieu, both certainly called to change brutally, that we must make live our group and develop its presence so that it'll be an active factor of the struggle for the Party. For this, while keeping vigilant and present in the daily fights, we must set our whole activities in a long run vision – the only one moreover which really allows us to be more present and efficient in the daily fights. In particular, it matters to integrate the permanent dynamic relation between internal life and intervention while acknowledging that today, and in last instance, it is the internal life (included **understood as internal life of the Proletarian Camp**) which defines the intervention, content and level, and guarantees the class content and the regularity as well as the ability to speed up. For the reporter, it is still the dimension of internal political life which remains determining for the strengthening and the development of the group and its unity (the different nucleus must still strengthen their ties, in particular Toronto with Montreal). In this sense, the debate and the clarification that we have begun on the class consciousness must enable us not only to deepen our understanding of the dynamic of the development of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle, the first place of the political dimension in the class fight, the role of political leadership of the Party, the struggle of the communist organizations in the class struggles and in the fight for the Party, but also the activity and the functioning of the small communist groups of today as ours.

April 2016.

OUR POSITIONS

- Since World War 1, capitalism has been a decadent social system which has nothing to offer the working class and humanity as a whole except cycles of crises, wars and reconstructions. Its irreversible historical decay poses the single alternative for humanity : **socialism or barbarism.**
- The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.
- The stratified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba, etc., and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.
- Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.
- All the nationalist ideologies -'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination', etc.- whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.
- In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as stalinism and fascism.
- All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist', and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists, anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.
- With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.
- In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.
- Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the

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

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

OUR ACTIVITY

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

OUR ORIGINS

- The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history. The IGCL thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the Communist League of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the International Workingmen's Association, 1864-72, the Socialist International, 1884-1914, the Communist International, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the German, Dutch and Italian Lefts, and the groups of the Communist Left which had specially developed in the 1970s and 1980s and which were stemming from these fractions