

REVOLUTION or WAR #12

Journal of the International Group of the Communist Left (IGCL)
Special Issue – July 2019



On the Proletarian Camp and its Future

The Battle for the Reconfiguration of the Proletarian Camp is Launched

Struggle for the Party

The Report of Activities for the 2nd General Meeting of the IGCL

The Report of the 1st Congress of Emancipación (Nuevo Curso)

Our Statement on the 1st Congress of Emancipación

The New "Points of Unity" of the GCCF

Some Rapid Comments on the GCCF "Points of Unity"

Struggle against Opportunism

Letter to the group Internationalist Voice

Statement on the 23rd Congress of the ICC

To Introduce the Poison of the Theory of Parasitism within the Proletarian Camp

Historical and Theoretical Impasse of the ICC Theory of the Decomposition
(Internal Fraction of the ICC, 2005)

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4 dollars/3 euros

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(Our review is also available in French)

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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 with translations is also welcome). If they want to receive the journal regularly and be informed of our communiques, they can send us their email at intleftcom@gmail.com.

Warning for the English version of this journal

We were unable to correct and verify the English translation of several texts in this issue. We apologize for the difficulty of the reading and we hope that there is no political misunderstanding. If any doubt, one can always refer to the French version.

This issue of the journal is a special one entirely dedicated to the situation of the proletarian camp, i.e. the revolutionary political forces that claim to be part of the Communist Left. We will resume the normal thread of our review and its frequency in October with a more balanced summary that will try to answer both the situation and the questions faced by the international proletariat in its struggles and the political and theoretical debates within this camp which constitutes, in fact, the world communist party in the making.

The Battle for the Reconfiguration of the Proletarian Camp is Launched

Why dedicate an entire issue of our journal to the state of the communist forces whose influence and impact on the immediate situation seem so small? On the one hand, because as the highest expressions of class consciousness¹, the groups of the International Communist Left are an element, product and factor, of the world situation, in the evolution of the relation of forces between the classes. That their direct influence on the proletarian struggles and the situation is more or less important, often insignificant at first sight, does not change the fact that they are an expression of the reality of this relation of forces. On the other hand, because after decades of (relatively) stable conformation, a reconfiguration of the *proletarian camp* is underway with the emergence of a new generation and new communist forces and the relative exhaustion of the old generation and political groups that had developed after 1968.

The current historical situation, since the 2008 crisis and the exacerbation of capitalist contradictions at all levels, first and foremost in terms of imperialist rivalries and class antagonisms, also puts increasing pressure on this milieu, in particular on its most dynamic forces, those *partidist* that set themselves within the historical struggle for the party and for the political exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It demands them more and better. It faces them up to their responsibilities. It highlights their weaknesses and shortcomings. And it encourages the emergence of new revolutionary forces and energies that seek and find in the Communist Left a theoretical and political coherence and a programmatic framework for their engagement. This is how *Nuevo Curso*² emerged in Spain, brilliantly defending class positions, overflowing with dynamism – his blog publishes practically one statement everyday –, even though with a particular political approach. In its wake, animated and encouraged by its dynamism, particularly in Spain and on the American continent, South and North, young militants and groups began to discuss and gather. A real dynamic of discussion and regrouping then developed especially around groups,

among others, such as the Workers Offensive³ and the Gulf Coast Communist Fraction⁴. It is quite naturally that this new generation of inexperienced militants turned to the International Communist Left, and especially to its main organization, the Internationalist Communist Tendency (and to a lesser extent to our own group). Other young comrades from the United States have also come closer to the so-called "bordiguist" current by joining one of its groups. But in turn, as particular expressions of the development of the situation, these new forces challenge and question the historical groups and currents of the *proletarian camp* by directly and concretely setting them in face of their responsibility and putting them to the test.

Within this *proletarian camp*, the so-called "bordiguist" current has been dispersed into a multitude of small groups since the explosion of the International Communist Party-*Communist Program* in the early 1980s. The fundamental reasons for this, beyond the hazards of the organizational crisis of that time, were due to the inadequacy of its basic political positions – support for national liberation struggles, defence of the red union... The International Communist Current has been openly engaged in an opportunist process since at least 2001, revising one by one its basic positions and Marxism. These two currents are today unable, for different reasons, to respond to the legitimate questions, needs and demands of the younger generations – this is especially true for the ICC. If groups inspired more by the tradition of the so-called "Dutch" Left – they are not always *councilist* – had been able to survive or even emerge, after the late 1960s, they have now disappeared and, in fact, their programmatic framework could not allow them to serve as a pole around which new forces and, more broadly, the camp as a whole could be articulated or even regrouped.

To date, only the ICT could, and still can, constitute this historical, political and organizational reference pole around which the rest of the camp, *the party in the making*, can and should meet. This question – which we have been defending since our constitution – is all the more difficult to make prevail and understand because the ICT itself is very reluctant to assume this role and sometimes even turns its back on

1 . We cannot explain this point here which refers to the relationship between class consciousness and the party on the one hand and the extent of this consciousness within the proletarian class on the other hand (see *Revolution or War* #6 and 7 :<http://www.igcl.org/On-Class-Consciousness> and <http://www.igcl.org/International-Communist-Current>).

2 . <https://nuevocurso.org/>

3 . <https://www.workersoffensive.org/>.

4 . <https://gulfcoastcommunistfraction.wordpress.com/>.

it. However, this role, this place, is granted to it by history, both by the direct organic link – albeit now tenuous – with the Communist Party of Italy since its foundation and by the state of the other currents of the Communist Left. For our part, we have neither this organic link, nor the *programmatic corpus*, nor thus the political legitimacy and authority, much less the material organization – of which the number of members is only one aspect – to be able to claim such a role⁵. To claim it today would be a political mistake that could only further divide this camp, hinder its regrouping and unity *in process*, and disorient new generations and groups.

Unfortunately, instead of encouraging the development of an open milieu to political debates and confrontations, the ICT's policy of regroupment in North America has very quickly reduced to and focused only on those elements that it has found it could quickly integrate into its ranks. This policy was even claimed in an article of the CWO in November 2018, at the height of the debates that were taking place in this new milieu :

*"Around the world it is clear that a new generation is coming to the politics of the communist left and that throws up new challenges for organisations like the Internationalist Communist Tendency. Establishing a clear revolutionary stance through applying Marxism to contemporary reality is our starting point but we cannot confine ourselves to that. As Onorato Damen said revolutionary politics "cannot be restricted to a typewriter". **This is not a time for fractions or discussion circles.** It is time to form nuclei of revolutionaries everywhere and for them to converge in the creation of an international and internationalist revolutionary party in preparation for the inevitable class conflicts of the future"* (*The Significance of the German Revolution*⁶, we underline).

In doing so, it cut short the open process of political debate and clarification that should have developed. And it abandoned the comrades and circles that seemed not to share all its positions, causing in return a rejection from them of the ICT itself that we now have the greatest difficulty in fighting. *Nature abhors a vacuum*. It is in this space freed by the ICT and that no one could occupy in its place, not even us, that the main *anti-partidist* forces of the moment, those who advocate the fight against *decomposition*

and *parasitism*, the ICC and its *satellite in parasitism*, *Internationalist Voice*, rushed to pollute the reflection and the work of re-appropriation of these young comrades with the destructive poison, destroying communist groups and the political convictions of the militants, of the *theory of parasitism*.

We are therefore at a decisive moment in the historical struggle for the party, certainly at an early stage of its process, whose outcome can pave the way for the establishment of a dynamic and renewed proletarian camp tending towards its unity or a relapse into division and sectarianism. It was precisely at this crucial moment that Nuevo Curso-Emancipación celebrated its 1st Congress while our group held its 2nd General Meeting. We publish extracts from the activities report that we adopted and that we have conceived as much as for the IGCL itself as for the proletarian camp as a whole. In particular, it tries to warn all the *partidist* forces, old and new, ourselves of course but also and above all the ICT, against the danger of the *circle spirit*, in particular as it is expressed today through social networks and the Internet, which hinders the development of the *party in the making*. The 1st Congress of Emancipación marks its constitution as a full and entire political group – which is positive and which we welcome – but also the adoption of a position, undoubtedly premature, which claims a historical continuity with the... 4th International! At the same time, the GCCF adopted new *Points of Unity*, published here, following the debate in which we participated⁷ on their first platform, despite the fact that it was the main target of the ICC offensive on parasitism.

Finally, and **to the extent that the struggle for the party and regrouping is also a struggle against opportunism**, we are publishing a letter to *Internationalist Voice* demanding that this group clarify its attitude in the proletarian camp and our statement on the 23rd Congress of the ICC. We accompany it with a text from the 2005 Internal Fraction of the ICC published in its bulletin #30, which criticizes the theory of decomposition and outlines the link between it and the so-called fight against *clanism* and *parasitism*.

To the new forces: the proletarian camp is also a field of confrontation between opposing forces due to the constant penetration of political opportunism. To all: the forces involved, a left that is still hesitant and searching for itself and an opportunist and sectarian right that is committed to *the struggle against parasites*, are identified. No one can escape the battle that is being launched. We better should go into it with determination and decision.

The IGCL, July 2019.

5 . The same applies to other groups or circles, such as Robin Goodfellow or *A Free Retriever Digest*, with different positions and origins, that claim to be part of the Communist Left and that, in fact and in our opinion, actively participate "in their own way" and positively in the historical struggle for the party.

6 . <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2018-11-23/the-significance-of-the-german-revolution>.

7 . See the October 2018 IGCL letter on the GCCF website .

Struggle for the Party

As we indicate in the presentation of this special issue, the report of activities adopted by our 2nd General Meeting is intended to be a report from and for our group as well as for the proletarian camp as a whole. We believe that our organisational experience and practice are everyone's business, and as such they can and should be criticised if necessary. And we claim to believe that they can be used for reflection both by the new communist forces and groups emerging today and by the former groups and militants of the "old" proletarian camp from the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, we warn against the circle spirit as it is expressed today, promoted by the use and democratic ideology specific to the social networks of the Internet, and we propose the party method to counter and overcome it, the very one that Lenin best presented and defended in his time.

Activities Report for the 2nd General Meeting of the IGCL – June 2019

"In recent years the question of "what is to be done" has confronted Russian Social-Democrats with particular insistence. It is not a question of what path we must choose (as was the case in the late eighties and early nineties), but of what practical steps we must take upon the known path and how they shall be taken. It is a question of a system and plan of practical work. And it must be admitted that we have not yet solved this question of the character and the methods of struggle, fundamental for a party of practical activity, that it still gives rise to serious differences of opinion which reveal a deplorable ideological instability and vacillation. On the one hand, the "Economist" trend, far from being dead, is endeavouring to clip and narrow the work of political organisation and agitation. On the other, unprincipled eclecticism is again rearing its head, aping every new "trend", and is incapable of distinguishing immediate demands from the main tasks and permanent needs of the movement as a whole" (Lenin, *Where to Begin*?, 1901⁸).

In broad terms, the problematics that the Russian revolutionaries were confronting with at the beginning of the 20th century today arises again in somewhat the same terms for the whole proletarian camp, and particularly for its components amongst the forces of the *Partidist Communist Left*, the ones which set themselves resolutely in the fight for the World Communist Party. Even if in a "modern" form, the permanent challenge of *Economism*, *Apolitism* and the *Anti-party* trend on the one hand and, on the other, and more immediately, the danger of theoretical and political *Eclecticism* guided by *Immediatism* come back today. The awakening of the latter almost mechanically accompanies the inevitable social and class reactions and revolts fed and provoked by the sharpness, the topicality, the **present** action of the

historical alternative proletarian revolution or generalized imperialist war. Both modern *Economism* and *Political Indifferentism* on the one hand and *Eclecticism* and *Immediatism* on the other affect the class as a whole, especially when it struggles, or tries, to struggle in mass – we cannot develop in this report – as well as the revolutionaries. These are the issues at which the whole proletarian camp, what Nuevo Curso (NC ⁹) calls *the party in the making*, sees standing before it. These are the two political failings and threats of opportunist order that can affect, and already partly are affecting, the proletarian camp; and within it our own group – unless we believe and decree that we would be protected, vaccinated, against the viruses of opportunist order that inevitably affect the communist milieu.

The balance-sheet of our activities since the 1st General Meeting of the group in July 2016 can only be established in relation to the evolution of the historical situation and the various questions it has presented to the proletariat and the communist groups – knowing that the latter are also completely part, products and factors, of this situation. (...).

It was only at the very beginning of the transition to 2018 that we found ourselves confronted with new events marking a relatively different moment, a significant evolution, of the historical situation that we analyse as the entry into a period of massive confrontations between the classes as a prelude to the resolution, in one way or another, of the historical alternative. This new moment in the development of class struggle may *raise questions*, at least require verification, about our general analysis and understanding :

- first of all, and even if we knew that the conformation of the "old" proletarian camp inherited from the 1970s-1980s would inevitably be disrupted,

8 . <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/may/04.htm>.

9 . <https://nuevocurso.org/>.

new communist forces emerged of which NC is the expression and a factor, thus directly confronting the historical groups of the *partidist* Communist Left with their historical responsibility in the face of this new dynamic and in front of which the Internationalist Communist Tendency, the main organization of this camp, began by locking itself into an attitude, or reflexes, **relatively** sectarian towards us and immediatist about these new forces ;

- then, the imperialist polarization is exacerbating under the pressure of the American bourgeoisie, Trump's politics and language, nothing unexpected in itself for us, and China becomes potentially and apparently one of America's main imperialist rivals while Germany and the European Union seem to have great difficulty to respond to the challenges Trump imposes on them – and in emerging as a rival pole. This forces us to verify, even question, our analysis as presented in our Theses on the International Situation of 2013¹⁰ according to which only Germany can aspire to be the head of an imperialist pole, and then of a bloc if the way to generalized war were to open up, opposing American power and leadership ;

- finally, the renewal of workers' and social struggles that took place throughout 2018 and which was marked mainly by a proletarian mass struggle dynamic in Iran, even in Mexico, and by a particular expression, with an interclassist character, of the bursting of social antagonisms with the *Yellow Vest* movement in France – while the railway workers' struggle in spring 2018 ended only a few months earlier with a major defeat. The two phenomena of *mass strike* and the *Yellow Vests*, their respective characteristics and the international repercussions they have encountered, mark the beginning of a period of massive (and violent) confrontations between the classes. (...).

In fact, from January 2018 onwards, (...) a number of new questions emerged and it is necessary to check more closely whether we have succeeded to respond to the 2016 mandate in face of these new conditions, whether we could respond to the development of the situation and, above all, whether the group as a whole has succeeded in taking into account the changes and adapting, if necessary, our axes of intervention.

1) In the Face of Ongoing Changes, Is There a Need for a New Orientation for the IGCL?

We can therefore wonder if the evolution of the situation, the entry into a period of massive confrontations between the classes, does not require a break, at least a significant evolution, of our activities and its priorities as defined and adopted by the

previous General Meeting of 2016:

*"Nevertheless, it remains some "objective" fragilities 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"* (Revolution or War #6, 2016, Activities Report for the IGCL General Meeting¹¹).

Do the changes that occurred with 2018 reverse the relationship between internal life and external intervention as we defined it in 2016? The question is all the more worth asking because the ICT, certainly based on slightly different theoretical and political premises (we do not exactly share the same vision of the struggle for the party), seems to defend a different orientation:

*« Around the world it is clear that a new generation is coming to the politics of the communist left and that throws up new challenges for organisations like the Internationalist Communist Tendency. Establishing a clear revolutionary stance through applying Marxism to contemporary reality is our starting point but we cannot confine ourselves to that. As Onorato Damen said revolutionary politics "cannot be restricted to a typewriter". **This is not a time for fractions or discussion circles.** It is time to form nuclei of revolutionaries everywhere and for them to converge in the creation of an international and internationalist revolutionary party in preparation for the inevitable class conflicts of the future »* (ICT, The Significance of the German Revolution, nov. 2018¹², we underline).

The article, written by a member of the CWO, the British group of the ICT, clearly rejects the "fractions

10 . *Revolution or War #1*, <http://igcl.org/Theses-on-the-Historical-Situation>.

11 . <http://igcl.org/Activities-Report-for-the-IGCL>

12 . <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2018-11-23/the-significance-of-the-german-revolution>.

or discussion circles". Beyond the rejection of the organizational form in itself and more serious, it underestimates, ignores, and in fact rejects, any process of political confrontation and clarification as a central means and essential moment of the struggle for the party. However, this process of political confrontation and clarification – which must be open to the proletarian camp as a whole – is, contrary to this vision, the central necessity of the present moment: **to arm politically and theoretically** the new generation that comes by linking it to the Communist Left precisely on these two levels; and not to seek to *win for oneself* in itself in an *immediatist* approach in the hope that the mere adherence will suffice to this theoretical-political armament – if it were so simple! Other comrades, in particular Nuevo Curso, noted a fatalistic, even a wait-and-see trend, in our latest communiqué on the Yellow Vests:

"We differ from the fatalism that we sense in the final phrases of the statement reproduced below. It is true that the weakness of communists in today's struggles reflects "the present international and historical relationship of forces between classes... but as in every dialectical relationship, their true solution is the affirmation of their opposite: if we communists want to transform the relationship of forces between the classes we must begin by confronting our own weakness on the basis of the elements within our grasp. (Nuevo Curso, Los chalecos amarillos tres meses después, January 30th 2019¹³).

This critical questioning of NC – whose spirit and content we share as such – has also been expressed on various occasions and in various forms in our own ranks. And despite its identification and mention on several occasions, we have not been able to debate it openly and clearly resolve the issue. (...).

So, beyond the immediate and cyclical questions, and to the extent that the question, even the criticism, is raised both in the proletarian camp and within ourselves, it is legitimate to wonder about the orientation that we must define today: **is it not time for the intervention dimension to dictate and determine now, and unlike the previous period, all our activities?**

2) Use the Party Method to Debate and Define our Orientations

It is difficult to maintain and develop *a party method* in a very small group like ours whose photo, the immediate reality, is that of a small circle. In fact, it is a large part, if not all, of the proletarian camp that lives as a set of circles because of the dispersion,

13 . <https://nuevocurso.org/los-chalecos-amarillos-tres-meses-despues/>.

eclecticism, chapel spirit, informalism, the weight of individualism that prevail. Even the functioning and intervention of its main organization, the ICT, which is nevertheless *organically* linked with the CP and the Communist Left of Italy, is under the weight of a relative informalism, personalism and individualism, and therefore of the spirit of circle¹⁴. In a way, and without making it an absolute, or a *copy and paste*, we can still draw a parallel with the situation faced by the Russian social democratic revolutionaries at the beginning of the 20th century. At least it should serve as an experience and reference for us:

"Our movement suffers in the first place, ideologically, as well as in practical and organisational respects, from its state of fragmentation, from the almost complete immersion of the overwhelming majority of Social-Democrats in local work, which narrows their outlook, the scope of their activities, and their skill in the maintenance of secrecy and their preparedness" (Lenin, *ibidem*).

There is no doubt that some, no matter how many, will make fun of our aspiration and claim to use this *party method*. We are few, very few, too few, claiming it today, including within the proletarian camp itself. However, the immoderate, uncontrolled use of the new media and networks of the *Web 2.0* encourages the spread of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democratic ideology and the disease that affect all these forces, including those claiming the Communist Left as well as the new generations without experience. This one can be characterized as the *Circle Spirit Version 2.0*. Defending the party method and its illustration in our practice is one of the tasks that our group must set for itself in the face of the new generation of revolutionaries that is emerging and struggling to break away from the democratic, individualistic, subjective and emotional practice of the social networks. In short, without making an absolute parallel with the past, **the fight against the circle spirit is fully topical and at the forefront of the fight for the party.**

In our case, and in order to prepare the General Meeting, our *congress*, the *party method* requires the political identification of the political tendencies mentioned above and which confront each other, at

14 . We leave aside the ICC, which has become a sect, with no hope of return now, and which has largely marginalized itself, or even put itself offside, of the proletarian camp because of its opportunist positions – decomposition –, the denial of its political principles – for example, the abandonment of the historical alternative war or revolution – and its sectarian and destructive orientations – destroying the other components of the proletarian camp, starting with the TCI (see *Shameful Resolution of the ICC* and *The Hidden Resolution of the ICC* : http://fractioncommuniste.org/eng/bci06/bci06_3.php and http://fractioncommuniste.org/eng/bci07/bci07_8.php).

least potentially, within our own ranks as well as in the camp. For they are more or less assertive expressions of contradictory tendencies within the proletarian camp as a whole and at the same time the, indirect and sometimes direct, reflection and expression of the contradictions and difficulties which the international proletariat finds itself confronted with, particularly in its struggles. We can define and summarize them – and not reduce them – to the hesitations and weaknesses that the revolutionary class experiences in seizing the political dimension of its struggles by opposing and confronting the various forces, mainly trade unions and politicians, of the capitalist state apparatus; that is, again and again the danger of Apolitism, Political Indifferentism, modern Economism embodied by Councilism.

*"We have taken the first step, we have aroused in the working class a passion for "economic", factory exposures; we must now take the next step, that of arousing in every section of the population that is at all politically conscious a passion for political exposure (Lenin, *ibidem*).*

It is not in itself a question of making every nuance a debate and a definitive confrontation leading to hasty political characterizations and condemning anyone, even less of course to systematic splits; on the contrary, it is a question of setting the terms and conditions for the widest possible political clarification and the overcoming of these oppositions; latent oppositions in our case and oppositions that are not developed to the point that such or such members personify them, carry them and materialize them specifically; more or less open and expressed oppositions among the groups of the proletarian camp.

The utilization of the *method* that seeks to identify and polarize differences and debates is made all the more difficult in a very small group whose image and immediate reality are that of a circle. It is difficult not to "personalize" the debates in a group of few members. All the more reason to hold on and practice, try to practice and develop, the party method : *"But now that I have become a member of a party, (...) I am obliged to give formal reasons for my "confidence" or "lack of confidence", that is, to cite a formally established principle of our programme, tactics or Rules; I must not just declare my "confidence" or "lack of confidence" without giving reasons, but must acknowledge that my decisions – and generally all decisions of any section of the Party – have to be accounted for to the whole Party; I am obliged to adhere to a formally prescribed procedure when giving expression to my "lack of confidence" or trying to secure the acceptance of the views and wishes that follow from this lack of confidence. From*

*the circle view that "confidence" does not have to be accounted for, we have already risen to the Party view which demands adherence to a formally prescribed procedure of expressing, accounting for, and testing our confidence" (Lenin, One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, 1904¹⁵). In our case, our ability – noted at the 1st General Meeting of 2016 – to send and exchange regularly discussion reports or letters with arguments – and not instant *posts* specific to networks – responding to each other provides the essential organizational means and framework to found and develop our debates, including contradictory debates, on written documents, material facts – and not on subjective and/or personal impressions. (...).*

3) A Report of *Continuity* and not *Rupture*

For the reporter, it is the first option and orientation he will propose that the General Meeting adopt. Nevertheless, today, in the face of the significant evolution of the situation, including the communist forces, it is necessary to specify the formula of our 2016 General Meeting: ***it is still the dimension of internal political life within the proletarian camp as a whole that remains decisive for the strengthening and development of this camp and its unity to which our group is a party and factor.***

Why such a choice when the question of a break-up can legitimately be raised? At the very moment when the world situation and its historical stakes are becoming clearer; when the capitalist class is forced to redouble its attacks and to start and generalize a real class war against the proletariat; when workers minorities emerge in the inevitable struggles that ensue and increasingly question the future of capitalism and the need for a new society; and even when new communist forces emerge and a new dynamic shakes up the ordering and conformation of the old proletarian camp and particularly the *partidist* forces within it? At first glance, everything would seem to support the CWO's thesis according to which *"This is not a time for fractions or discussion circles. It is time to form nuclei of revolutionaries everywhere and for them to converge in the creation of an international and internationalist revolutionary party"*¹⁶; that the immediate, the hour, is to win and regroup as quickly as possible proletarian energies in order to be able to influence directly and massively, even lead, the proletarian struggles at the risk,

15 . <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1904/onestep/q.htm> .

16 . This approach and vision of the priorities of the moment is not specific to the ICT or its British group, the CWO. Others tend to share them, such as sometimes Nuevo Curso – although not always in the same terms – or other new and young forces *spontaneously* tending to set their political horizon in the short term and in the immediate future.

otherwise, that they systematically fail and do not succeed in changing the dynamics of the relation of forces between the classes...

This approach presents two mistakes: the first sees – or reduces – the solution of the problem of the party-class relation to the immediate influence of revolutionaries, the *party*, in the class independently of the real – i. e. political – course of the relation of forces between the classes (cf. our critical comments to the ICT's positions in RG #10 and 11); the second does not take into account an essential factor of this relation of forces, its course or dynamics: the present reality of the proletarian camp itself – marked by its isolation, weakness and dispersion –, of the Communist Left and the political groups that claim it, as the highest expressions of the class consciousness. Both errors present the danger of falling into a kind of voluntarism – to be distinguished from political will and conviction – and immediatism – expecting immediate results, here the adherence of sympathisers and members, and basing the orientations on these hopes independently of the real course of proletarian struggles. And, if these expectations are not confirmed – which is highly probable for the immediate future –, political distress and, then, political demoralization often result from it¹⁷. (...).

It is therefore a real fight that we must wage in the proletarian camp as a whole against these expressions of immediatism, which cannot fail to multiply in the face of the acceleration and aggravation of class antagonisms and the characteristics, including the difficulties, specific to the *mass strike* process in the current period. Acceleration and aggravation will offer the temptation of the *impatient wait* and therefore the search for immediate success, especially in terms of direct influence in the class or militant membership, instead of the strengthening and the international political, theoretical and programmatic unity of the *party in the making*. However, this danger of immediatism is aggravated by the weight of the circle spirit and informalism that tends to prevail in its modern form 2.0 and that we have previously pointed out. This general atmosphere of immediacy, made of instantaneous, direct, *posts*, which are very often, too often, reduced to individual subjectivity and emotion rather than to systematic, methodical, collective, centralised and therefore organised reflection, that is *the party method*, exerts a pressure on the whole historical groups of the Communist Left, and also on our own group, to which we must

17 . *Immediatism* in the workers' ranks, and especially among the petty-bourgeois today presents other risks for the proletarians and combative elements known as *radicals*: the idealization of leftist radicalism and adventurism and the apology, in one form or another, of minority violence such as the black bloc or even terrorist violence.

try to resist by attaching ourselves and re-appropriating the past experiences of the workers movement.

4) At the Heart of our Activities : the Journal *Revolution ou War*

"In our opinion, the starting-point of our activities, the first step towards creating the desired organisation, or, let us say, the main thread which, if followed, would enable us steadily to develop, deepen, and extend that organisation, should be the founding of an All-Russian political newspaper. A newspaper is what we most of all need; without it we cannot conduct that systematic, all-round propaganda and agitation, consistent in principle, which is the chief and permanent task of Social-Democracy in general (...). The role of a newspaper, however, is not limited solely to the dissemination of ideas, to political education, and to the enlistment of political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. (...) With the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organisation will naturally take shape that will engage, not only in local activities, but in regular general work, and will train its members to follow political events carefully, appraise their significance and their effect on the various strata of the population, and develop effective means for the revolutionary party to influence these events" (Lenin, *ibid*, we underline).

We can draw a parallel between the central role that Lenin attributed to the regular publication of a newspaper and whose arguments are developed in *What is to be done?*, and the development of our own *collective organization*. Since the creation of the IGCL, all our activities have been articulated around our journal. A large part of the balance-sheet of the group's activities can and must be based on the yardstick of *Revolution or War*, our publication whose regularity has been respected and confirmed, and its political content, analyses, orientations, positions but also articles from other groups or sympathizers and public debates assumed. Our journal is not only a collective organiser at the technical level or in terms of the functioning of the group for its production, choice of summaries, articles, contributions, translations, discussions of draft articles, etc. but also, **and above all, at the political level as the main factor of the group's homogeneity and political unity.** (...).

[Follows here a more precise balance-sheet of the journal and its practical realization that we don't reproduce publicly, Redaction's note]

In short, the content and political orientations of our journal fairly accurately expresses the very dynamics

of our group, its strengths and weaknesses, and the questions it faces and tries to address, as well as those of the proletarian camp as a whole. Its regular publication, which has never been denied, has become a positive experience that must be still further consolidated. But above all, the 2nd General Meeting of our group should consider the evolution of our review since... 2018. Until then, it was essentially the publication of the IGCL, whose main focus was "*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, 2013, RG #1¹⁸). Since the emergence of new forces, Nuevo Curso, the GCCF and Workers Offensive in the United States, or the comrades gathered around the *Free Retriever Digest* in the Netherlands, our journal does not hesitate and must reproduce the positions and contributions that these groups make, not only to "use them on our own account" – unite and rationalize joint efforts – but also and especially to promote and develop as closely as possible the most united and effective expression of the Communist Left on an international level. We must therefore continue to develop our orientation of openness to the other forces of the camp in, and through, the journal **so that it is, as far as possible, a publication of the proletarian camp as a whole, a tool for debate and clarification; but also so that the Communist Left speaks with a single voice when possible. In short, that it be a means and a moment of the struggle for the party.**

The development of this expansion or opening of the publication requires from us a greater political control and permanent vigilance against any concession to theoretical and political eclecticism. It will therefore be necessary to encourage internationalist positions on major events (as was the case for the Catalan question or the mass strike in Iran) and questions that raise debates and theoretical and political points to be clarified (as was the case for the party-class relation, the historical alternative, the period of transition...). **The strengthening of the struggle for our political homogeneity and unity, the strengthening of the internal life dimension, is the condition to be able to carry out this proposal of opening and widening, extending, of the intervention of the journal in the camp as a whole and in the class in the most useful and effective way possible for the struggle for the party; that is, in the sense of regrouping and political unity, as a moment of the fight for the party, and not in the sense of eclecticism**

and democratism, that is as a moment of dilution and liquidation of the party.

5) Internal Functioning and Method of Party

Undoubtedly, *Revolution or War* is our *collective organizer* to use the expression and, we hope, the *party method* put forward by Lenin in his time. In fact, our publication centralizes (synthesizes) and materializes all our activities and gives them a rhythm, a regular and permanent dynamic. However, only a permanent collective activity and mobilization can establish and develop the effective political presence of a communist group and, at the same time, allow it to accelerate and to face any unforeseen or sudden event in the situation.

Its implementation in terms of political content and editorial choice requires us to maintain and develop as much as possible a permanent internal life that the individual will of the members alone would not be enough to guarantee, far from it. (...) As a result of our material objective reality, for the number of members, as a circle, the weight of individual responsibilities and convictions is all the more important and makes this achievement more fragile. The *party method*, made all the more necessary by the conditions of our daily lives, requires a redoubled effort and vigilance against expressions and temptations, and other apparent facilities, diverse and varied, collective and individual, of the circle spirit. (...).

Addition of Individual Writers or Towards a Collective Writer?

In a meeting a comrade expressed the opinion that he did not have "*the editorial capacity to be part of a redaction committee. He can do the technical work, however (proofreading, corrections, etc.). He suggests that it is [the other comrades] who should be in charge of such a committee*" (report of March 14, 2019). Let us stop for a moment on this point and *polarize* the underlying debate without personalizing it. This approach and understanding of the member's relationship to the activities to be carried out by the organisation – which cannot be limited here to the work of a *redaction committee* alone – *tends* to deny the collective and centralised dimension of all the activities of a communist group, all the more of the party. Admittedly, not all its members have the same individual "abilities", "qualities", "predispositions" or "attractions" and the collective body must use the forces at its disposal to the best of its tasks and class struggle. In this sense and at first sight, it may seem obvious that it is better to have a "good writer" than a "bad one". But the fundamental question is not technical, here the ability to write, there to translate or master a foreign language, or to be a good speaker,

18 . <http://www.igcl.org/Resolution-on-the-foundation-of>.

propagandist or agitator, etc. It is **above all and before any a political one**, and therefore also a collective one. In addition to the fact – curious in itself but above all dangerous from the point of view of fraternal political relations and the involvement of each militant – of keeping one only member out of the group's core activity, leaving political – and not technical or practical – responsibility for a particular activity to "specialists" or a certain type of militants is not the concept that communists must develop in terms of centralisation of the activities and realization of the tasks. One thing is to give a mandate, permanent or not, depending on the situation, to a particular body, central or not, or to one or more delegates; another is to "withdraw" from a collective task at the risk of either "specializing" in another or ending up becoming uninvolved and demoralized. In one case, the mandate given makes the mandatee accountable to the collective to which he is accountable, and we have an effective centralization of militant work according to the *party method*. In the other case, we have an individual withdrawal according to the circle spirit and a formalization, if not a theorization, of a division of labour within the party that leads to federalism and autonomism, then to individual specialization and political division. In one case, we have a political confidence that can be established, developed and verified on the basis of a mandate because "*I am accountable for my decisions (...) to the whole party*" (Lenin, op. cit.) and thus, among other things, that provides the political conditions, including the appropriate organizational framework, for such and such member to **also** develop new "individual" capacities; here editorial. In the other, the supposed lack of confidence in one's own **individual** capacities, as a starting point for reflection, and the renunciation or even resignation from this collective task, which results from it, considers the problem from, and reduces it to, the militant individual – and not from the organized collective, the *party*. It turns its back on the party method and tends to consider the communist political organization as an addition of individualities and not as a collective body; here as a sum of individual writers and not, of course, as a collective writer.

The report proposes that all comrades in the group, as it exists today, actively participate in the redaction committee, which does not mean that it should be decreed that all comrades must each one write at least one article every issue. This means that all comrades have at heart at all times, on a daily basis, the realization of the journal as a whole – because they will receive the mandate from the General Meeting and "*will have to account to the whole party*" – and that each of them contributes to it

according to his/her capacity in the same way and with the same responsibility as the other members. The principle that must guide any *redaction committee*, and the *party* itself, is that of the process that tends and aims **to move from a collective of writers to a collective writer**. Even if it cannot be decreed because it depends closely on the homogeneity and political unity *in the making* – which is why it is still necessary to "sign individually" certain articles –, it is nevertheless the objective and *spirit* that must guide the editorial work and the realization of the publications; and the principle that must define the *party method* to be used and developed by any redaction committee.

How to Struggle against the Inevitable Internal Heterogeneity in Order to Reduce It as Much as Possible

Nor, of course, is it a question for the organized and centralized collective body, that is the *party*, to impose by force on members tasks for which they do not feel adapted or for which they have no appetite, at least initially. The policy of *injunction*, here to force a comrade to perform a certain task of which he or she is not convinced, is not a useful mode of operation for the communist organization because it is not effective. A comrade who is not convinced of a task or political orientation will have the greatest difficulty in carrying it out, will probably do it badly, and in the long run will risk losing confidence in the organized collective, in his own convictions and finally by becoming demoralized. In this case, the party method consists in the collective taking on the task as best it can and eventually convincing the comrade that it has a full place in its realization – is this not the method that striking or struggling workers tend to use spontaneously when they organize their struggle themselves (and not the unions)? It is not always very fast, its solution is certainly not the most immediate from a formal (or formalist) point of view, but there is no other from the communist one; that is, from the point of view of the effectiveness of the proletarian struggle. On this level too, *voluntarist* research and the impatient expectation of immediate results are often in vain and end up being counterproductive and ultimately dangerous. (...).

We insist on this false method of *injunction* because we often find it in the history of the workers movement and its revolutionary organizations. To give just one example, it was precisely a means used first by the Zinovievist opportunism, then systematized by triumphant Stalinism, to destroy and corrupt the convictions of many militants by forcing them to perform tasks and defend political positions of which they were not convinced and even which

they disagreed with¹⁹. It was once again to the honour of the lefts and especially the Left of the Communist Party of Italy, to fight these practices both in the immediate organizational struggle and at the theoretical and political level (cf. the Theses of Lyon, 1926²⁰, for example). This point will undoubtedly have to be discussed and clarified because it seems to us that a tendency, certainly a very relative and limited one, towards an injunction – or a kind of voluntarism – can sometimes be expressed among us, towards the proletarian camp or even intervention, and is caused in large part by disappointment at the lack of apparent immediate results.

From Each According to his Abilities and Permanence of Militant Commitment

Similarly, some questions have been raised on different occasions about the lack of availability of comrades for the proper realization of the group's tasks, which sometimes causes relative discouragement and silence, a non-participation, which continues at the risk of becoming demoralizing for the comrade affected by this difficulty and is worrying for the group (...). But the question of militant participation and involvement in the collective struggle is not a question of a minimum amount of hours and minutes per day that should be decreed for everyone's militant activity. In quantitative terms, participation is inevitably unequal between members and at different times – especially during and outside massive proletarian mobilizations. On the other hand, it is the *quality*, here the regular and permanent attention and militant concern for the organization's activities and the development of the historical situation, that must be defended and for which we must fight collectively and individually (...). The *militant life dimension* of the member of the communist organization, which is inevitably in a minority, or even extremely in a minority, in daily social life under capitalism, is not, and cannot be (except in revolutionary times, but then it is the whole class that is permanently militant), the only dimension of its social life – especially in an historical period in which state capitalism occupies all social and ideological spaces and exercises class domination over all dimensions of social life with the exception of massive proletarian mobilizations which,

19 . It was also a trend that wreaked havoc within the ICC on several occasions, particularly in the 1990s in the name of the party spirit and discipline. This petty-bourgeois understanding of the *party spirit and discipline*, which could very quickly transform into a *petty chief* attitude, which had more to do precisely with the Zinovievism of the 1920s of the "Bolshevization", than with the communist spirit and discipline, was one of the vectors of the opportunist gangrene that seized this organization in the 1990s and freed itself in the 2000s.

20 . <http://www.pcint.org/>.

precisely, break this control. **But the militant life dimension must tend to be at the centre of the communist militant's life as an awareness and concern about the tasks and function of the party.**

6) The Direct and Public Intervention

We can distinguish two types of intervention: that which responds to events in the situation, in particular workers' struggles or public meetings of leftist or revolutionary groups and which is in fact occasional, dependent on these events; and that which corresponds to the intervention of the communist organisation itself, according to its priorities and orientations, of a permanent nature and which aims to develop and establish its political presence in the environments in which it moves. Obviously, in both cases, the organization's intervention is also dependent and determined, in addition to its political capacity given here as acquired, by the physical, material and intervention capacity – essentially of a geographical nature and, to a lesser degree, by its militant forces. There is therefore a relationship, a relation between the necessity and the immediate *objective* interest of each intervention and the real capacities of intervention that defines the line to be followed, rarely rectilinear, and that makes it possible to avoid the pitfalls of *voluntarism* and *activism* – very often immediate and local – on the one hand and *passivity* and *fatalism* on the other hand. (...).

The Regular Intervention of the Group

Perhaps it is precisely the journal that most clearly illustrates the problem and difficulties facing communist intervention today in the face of "the absence of immediate results": on the one hand, we manage to publish it regularly, print it and put it on our website, and on the other hand its militant diffusion is extremely limited, even insignificant²¹. Admittedly, the visits and reading of our articles on our website are increasing steadily to this day; the growth curve is very encouraging since the site opened in 2014. What, basically, is the reason for such a low diffusion? A weakness or a lack of conviction and militant efforts on our part to distribute it? Or on more objective conditions? Of course Internet does not help, but we think it is due **above all** to the reality of the evolution of the relation of forces between the classes and the particularities of the workers' struggle in our era of omnipresent state capitalism. Our review is systematically distributed in all demonstrations and workers' struggles within our geographical reach, in public leftist or revolutionary

21 . We know that this is the case for all Communist Left groups such as the ICC or the ICT which have themselves identified it on different occasions (see the General Assembly of *Battaglia Comunista* late 2015 : <http://igcl.org/General-Assembly-of-the-PCInt/>).

group meetings in which we can participate and finally in the most important bookshops in the cities where we live or that we can reach... while following and controlling our diffusion (another line or balance to be found between the two pitfalls but this is a particular point). Certainly, we can always do better and more in itself. But will this *best* and this *more* change significantly the extent of our militant diffusion? We do not think so. And if this observation is correct, it is nevertheless necessary **to maintain our collective and individual conviction and militant will to continue and develop this diffusion by drawing as straight a line as possible between the effort of diffusion and the absence of immediate significant results, i.e. the number of sales, at the risk of losing sight of the raison d'être of the militant diffusion**, of making it a simple routine task by principle, with no concrete goal, and without enthusiasm or individual and collective dynamism; and at the end of risking becoming demoralized. Now, sales or not, the distribution of our journal is the flag and the general slogan that we wave in demonstrations and meetings and, as such, it assumes and participates in imposing the essential communist presence in these events. Its usefulness and necessity are not judged by the immediate results, here the number of copies sold; but by the historical and practical significance that the flags or banners *Revolution or War* for our group, *Battaglia Comunista* for the ICT or *Internationalism* for other publications, etc. represent concretely when they are brandished and displayed publicly. And if, in addition, we can add the *added value* – horror of the management *newspeak* – of a sale, and even more of a purchase, of a communist publication, the two being all the more militant if they are accompanied by a discussion... all the better!

It is the same problem that arises with the contacts and sympathizers that we can have in France and Canada and that we have met either during *public meetings* or *permanences* of the group, or in individual meetings (...). Similarly, we have intervened in public meetings of other revolutionary groups, particularly in Paris, or left-wing trade unionists in Montreal. On these occasions, in addition to some irregular militant sales, we succeed in intervening and thus assuming a relative, and in itself limited, political presence of the IGCL and more broadly of the Communist Left. If the situations of leftist and revolutionary political *worlds* are different between Montreal and Paris (in Paris, there is still a milieu, certainly very dispersed and eclectic, formed by the Communist Left), and much more so in Toronto, the "weak" results in terms of influence, contacts, sympathizers, and none in terms of

immediate perspective of organizational grouping or membership in our group, are of the same order. We are therefore faced with a general "objective" reality that we must take into account when defining not the need for intervention but the efforts that must be made in order to be as effective as possible in all our activities, including this one. **Neither immediatism nor fatalism. Nor voluntarism, nor renunciation.**

The Intervention within the Working Class Struggles

Overall, the group is able to mobilize and intervene in the expressions of workers' struggles in which it can be physically present. Although there were some limited expressions of struggle in Canada and some occasional interventions, it was mainly in France that the group had the opportunity to intervene in massive struggles: just before the previous general meeting, in the spring of 2016 in the fight against the labour law; but also in the mobilization of the railway workers and that of the yellow vests (still in progress at the time of writing this report) in 2018. Its capacity to intervene is not limited, of course, far from it, to its physical intervention but above all – it is a point to be clarified if necessary – as to its political content, orientations and slogans according to the moments and stages.

(...) We must therefore note that local isolation and the very weak number of members make it more difficult to apply the *party method* for interventions in mass struggles. Despite the group's support as a whole in our case, and also the proposal for support from members of Nuevo Curso during the French *yellow vests* movement – both of which are to be noted and welcomed –, the isolated member does not have a permanent organizational framework, a collective, to support him and to which he is accountable on a *daily* and *local* basis. He lacks the weekly local section meeting as the party's *base cell*. Without discussion or debate and especially without any immediate specific mandate other than the one he gives to himself, in fact and in the urgency of the situation, it is more difficult for the locally isolated militant to be "*accountable for his decisions (...) to the whole Party*". However, it would be wrong to conclude from this observation that we must absolutely, at all costs, or even as a priority, **seek** and "win" close sympathisers and contacts, even new members; in short, that we make it an orientation, worse an objective, in itself. We would then fall back into the trap of *voluntarism*. Similarly, to conclude that, since there is currently no possibility of breaking this isolation, it should be abandoned for "objective" reasons would be to fall into *fatalism* (...).

There are no immediate solutions to overcome this difficulty, isolated intervention, and only the group's

international collective framework, i.e. favouring even in periods of intense mobilization the writing of reports and the sharing of experience that best allows the group's participation as a whole in the reflection and definition of immediate and local orientations, can make it possible to overcome it. Always and again the party method.

Conclusions

This report does not provide an exhaustive overview of our activities. It will be up to the comrades to develop certain points if they deem it necessary. The entry into a period of massive confrontations between the classes, including the emergence of new generations of revolutionaries, is already testing the political groups of the proletarian camp and the Communist Left both in terms of the validity of their basic positions and orientations and in terms of the new and more direct responsibilities posed by the situation that is opening. Our group is no exception and facing historical responsibilities, intervention and political capacities for intervention in the class in particular, can't be decreed and are the object of an organized collective political struggle.

Despite this change in the situation and the new challenges it poses, we propose to continue and develop the orientations that we defined when the group was formed in 2013 and reaffirmed in 2016; the dimension *internal life* of the activities, debate, confrontation and political clarification and regrouping, of the groups of the proletarian *partidist* camp, and therefore of the IGCL, continues to determine and define the *external* dimension of intervention, **which is permanent and indispensable**, in the revolutionary class as a whole... This is the balance to be maintained and developed in the activities of our group and this is the main axis of our struggle for the party within the proletarian camp and, more broadly, the revolutionary forces, old or new. To do this, our biannual publication remains our main tool and, as such, must aim to develop its openness to other communist forces and consider itself as a review of the proletarian *partidist* camp; as a common tool and a moment of the struggle for the party. Our intervention in general and our review in particular must particularly fight against the very particular forms in which opportunism is expressed because of the new situation: the dangers of modern *Economism* and *Fatalism* on the one hand and theoretical-political *Eclecticism* and *Immediatism* on the other. These two dangers affect both the forces of the proletarian camp and the proletariat in its struggles even if in different ways or forms. Both are particularly favoured by the circle spirit that prevails throughout the international proletarian camp, including within the older groups of the Communist

Left.

To best combat these forms of opportunism, which are sometimes openly expressed, sometimes latently or potentially, and the circle spirit, it is up to our group to develop its use and practice of the *party method* both in its intervention towards the class and the revolutionary forces, including the proletarian camp and the Communist Left groups, as well as in its internal activities. It is essentially in its own practice that it will convince the other communist forces, the old ones to come back (for those who have forgotten it), the new ones to rise, of this method and of the spirit that must accompany it in the face of the *circle spirit*.

Only the application of, or the return to, this method can allow the real development of the theoretical and political homogeneity and unity of the forces that today constitute the *party in the making* by the systematization of political debates, confrontations and clarifications and the united expressions of internationalist and communist positions. The formalization and systematization of relations and debates within the camp is one of the two main conditions, as is the rejection of individualism and *emotional* immediatism specific to social networks, to the *circle spirit 2.0*.

The strengthening of our political homogeneity and unity as a particular group, or fraction, of this camp is the second. It requires constant vigilance and effort to maintain our regular internal political life. It involves effectively strengthening our **political centralization** in the production of the journal, developing the *collective writer*, and affirming the Montreal nucleus as a *central local section dynamizing* the group as a whole. Finally, it requires a practical understanding – not mystified – and a political conviction of its necessity – therefore not decreed, nor absolute – of the place that, in today's historical conditions, the militant dimension, *the communist commitment*, of the members of the *party in the making* must occupy in relation to the dimension of their personal and private life.

"For the very reason that the "masses are not ours" it is stupid and unseemly to shout about an immediate "assault", for assault means attack by regular troops and not a spontaneous mass upsurge. For the very reason that the masses may overwhelm and sweep aside the regular troops we must without fail "manage to keep up" with the spontaneous upsurge by our work of "introducing extremely systematic organisation" in the regular troops, for the more we "manage" to introduce such organisation the more probably will the regular troops not be overwhelmed by the masses, but will take their place at their head. Nadezhdin is confused because he imagines that

troops in the course of systematic organisation are engaged in something that isolates them from the masses, when in actuality they are engaged exclusively in all-sided and all-embracing political agitation, i.e., precisely in work that brings closer and merges into a single whole the elemental destructive force of the masses and the conscious destructive force of the organisation of revolutionaries. (...)

For an uprising is in essence the most vigorous, most uniform, and most expedient “answer” of the entire people to the government. Lastly, it is precisely such activity [the realization and the distribution of a common newspaper] that would train all revolutionary organisations throughout Russia to maintain the most continuous, and at the same time

the most secret, contacts with one another, thus creating real Party unity; for without such contacts it will be impossible collectively to discuss’ the plan for the uprising and to take the necessary preparatory measures on the eve, measures that must be kept in the strictest secrecy.

In a word, the “plan for an all-Russia political newspaper”, far from representing the fruits of the labour of armchair workers, infected with dogmatism and bookishness (as it seemed to those who gave but little thought to it), is the most practical plan for immediate and all-round preparation of the uprising, with, at the same time, no loss of sight for a moment of the pressing day-to-day work” (Lenin, What is To Be Done?, The “Plan” For an All-Russia Political Newspaper).

April 27th, 2019

1st Congress of Emancipación – Nuevo Curso

We follow the report of the 1st Congress of Emancipación published on the Nuevo Curso website with our own statement, which we have communicated in the form of a letter to the comrades. Reading the proceedings of the congress and our letter, the reader will understand that NC-Emancipación is at a crossroads between its claim – which we believe is premature – of historical continuity with the Fourth International and the programmatic positions that founded it on one side and the class positions, linked to the Communist Left, which Nuevo Curso has defended consistently and successfully to this day on the other. That is why we propose that we open a contradictory debate on this issue in the hope that the comrades will answer positively.

Report of the First Congress of Emancipation

On June 21, 22 and 23, the first Emancipation Congress was held with the participation of comrades and nuclei from three countries. The congress constituted Emancipation as a global and internationalist organization.

Situation of capitalism

Today’s capitalism is the product of a century of decadence. Since then it has slowed and deformed the development of productive forces. Once the fundamental expansion of the world market had been achieved, accumulation could only increase in the midst of a maelstrom of war, waste, qualitative and quantitative destruction, and the degradation of the human element: social relations, freedoms and culture. Everything that was sacred to the bourgeoisie itself –the individual, science, arts...- has been destroyed by a system that only knows how to grow - when it can- on the rubble of progressive slogans of the young bourgeoisie.

In 2007, a crisis only comparable to the first great economic crisis of the period of decadence broke out.

The already massive and daily destruction of productive forces was not compensated by the exuberance characteristic of each beginning of the accumulation cycle. The result was: gigantic masses of aimless capital while companies declared themselves insolvent; millions of unemployed seeking work while factories and businesses closed en masse; empty houses while millions of people, from China to Spain, could only choose between crowding in or living on the street; abandoned technologies while the pace and hours of work increased. And finally, when after more than ten years, the figures of capital performance demonstrated a recovery -not without biting off a good chunk of the salaries of the workers- the saturation of the world market in the face of aimless capital that circulates in the void of fictitious capital, is translated into trade and currency wars and in the first outbreaks of a new recession.

In this decade, capitalism has been incapable of reinitiating the mechanisms that would make another escape through credit expansion possible. The markets that they hoped to find – or to boost – in Asia

and Africa have proved illusory and the recovery of accumulation rates seems to have hit its limit.

The global situation is not even the same as it was ten years ago. Not only are the central bank mechanisms left with no room to manoeuvre, but the capacity to create social cohesion around the needs of national capital is significantly diminished by the internal battles of the bourgeoisie itself and the years of desperate – and sterile – movements of the petty bourgeoisie.

The only way in which the world bourgeoisie seems to find its way out is through the direct appropriation of the insurance and meager savings of the workers – pension, health and education systems – and the increase of exploitation in absolute terms: more real hours of work for lower total wages paid. Capital forces the realization of surplus value by using the state, which should cushion its contradictions, but rather encourages them.

Situation of the working class

However, the fact that capital is increasingly encountering obstacles in its accumulation cycle does not mean that capitalism is in danger. Exploitation can always continue to worsen. The objective conditions that make the revolutionary transformation of society possible have been in place for a century. The subjective conditions, the consciousness of the universal class capable of imposing a system based on universal human needs, are independent of the course of the crisis.

In fact, since the crisis began, only during the last three years of -supposed- recovery, we have seen massive class movements (Tamaulipas in Mexico, Jerada in Morocco, Heft Tappeh in Iran) and some attempts to affirm universal human needs suffocated inside the general tide of petty bourgeois movements (Gilets Jaunes).

However, a fundamental idea that was partly a cause and partly an effect of the struggles of the 1970s and 1980s still remains: “the workers’ struggle is only viable when there are profits for capital”; that is, “the struggle is not viable in the face of a concrete use of capital that is not profitable”.

Concealed under this formulation is the subjection of human necessity to the results of accumulation, of Humanity and labor against capital. It is a deadly poison that is still active and that is strengthened by the illusion promoted a thousand times by the state, the bourgeoisie and the left: that the functional divisions of capital in companies and investments of capital are independent entities in of themselves, as if capitalism were something that happened in the company and not in society, as if the system was but the mere sum, the aggregation of particular

exploitations. Neither accumulation and exploitation nor human needs are settled company by company, but rather on the overall economic, social and political outcome of the exploitation of one class by another as a whole.

At this moment that exploitation as a class is intensifying in the form of the direct appropriation of pensions, the abandonment of the health and training systems that formed part of the early conditions of exploitation, the increase in real working hours and the homogenization of wages downwards, tending to reduce not only the percentage of production that can be accessed through wages paid, but also the total wages paid.

That is to say, the bourgeoisie and the state further compress the fundamental contradiction of the system: their inability to increase proportionally to the demands of accumulation the consumption of the workers, which is the form that has historically satisfied their needs in capitalism.

For this reason, it needs more than ever to accompany this elevation of the degree of class contradictions with ideological palliatives that recover and reorient them. It organizes ideological campaigns to enclose workers around supposedly common causes that have secondary benefits for the bourgeoisie. It is a question of reinforcing its dominion by strengthening its bargaining position.

For example, the campaign on climate change - organized directly by the educational apparatus of the state- has as its main function to sell a new sacred union for the climate... but it also serves as an ideological battering ram for the European bourgeoisies in their struggle against China and the United States. The campaign that has been establishing feminism as a state ideology for the last three years not only divides the workers in the workplace itself, asserting that workers have opposing interests based on sex, but it also serves the purpose of offering a subsidized rebellion and a new placement opportunity for the rebellious petty bourgeoisie.

The support and collusion of the left for these campaigns, their use by the remnants of Stalinism (including Stalinized Trotskyism), as a form of ideological actualization, is by no means accidental. The prophets of state capitalism recover leading roles as the prophets of the new state ideologies – as can be seen from Syriza to the Argentinian FIT, passing through those of La France Insoumise, Podemos, and Bloco de Esquerda- .. when state capitalism – now universal – needs extraordinary forces in order to maintain, with pressure, the entrapment of the workers. This generates the illusion of an already impossible social cohesion.

The situation of the revolutionary party

Since the Manifesto of 1848, we communists have called the party the group of small conscious minorities that make the historical perspective of the class their own: communism as a universal, demercantiled and abundant society. Outside of revolutionary moments – and even within many of them – the party can only be a party in the making, a party in formation that tends to become the centralized and universal expression of the class struggle.

These minorities are not born out of nowhere or from scratch. Emancipation was born from the meeting of a group of workers who, faced with the emergence of a pre-war situation that led to the declaration of Catalan independence, reacted to the absence of internationalist voices that declared out loud what millions of workers thought: we are not prepared to go to a civil war between bourgeois groups, we are not going to die either for the Spanish homeland or for the Catalan one. The development of such a basic starting position, so apparently elementary, was nourished after we re-appropriated the work and positions of the main historical current of internationalism.

Since then we have sought relations with other internationalist minorities in the rest of the world, aspiring to coordinate common actions with a view to a global regrouping of revolutionaries.

Tasks of the revolutionaries

In a moment of class struggle like the present one, where a new wave of attacks against the living conditions of the workers is brewing and in which, at the same time, the past imposes a true generational hiatus, a loss of memory of the last wave of struggles. The main task of the revolutionaries departs from the slogan:

- Our needs do not depend on the profit of capital nor on the coffers of states, it is the other way around: the struggles only advance when they impose the criterion of necessity over that of profit. We will not “do the math” for them. Our fight will cost them.

This means confronting the unions from the very first moment, that of the most basic forms of organization of the class struggle. That is why the revolutionaries must wage a leading battle around calls for union strikes. Affirming clearly that:

- There are no strikes that get anywhere without an assembly leading them. The strike is not an opinion poll that can be adhered to or not individually, but a collective decision of all.

- For real and sovereign assemblies of all the workers of the company, without divisions by the type of contract or contracting company and the commitment of all to upholding the decisions made by the assemblies.

In the neighborhoods and wherever the productive structure is of small service companies, hospitality, commerce, etc. we will fight for neighborhood assemblies of all the workers, including precarious and temporary ones.

Slogans and immediate stances

The general program that leads from the immediate struggle for the most basic universal needs to the process of abolition of wage labor and the liberation of the productive capacities of Humanity, is still as valid as the revolutionaries had affirmed in the 1940s. For this, we refer to the section “Task of Our Times”, of For a Second Communist Manifesto, a fundamental text of our current.

Refining the slogans and lines of intervention, Emancipation will immediately permeate these slogans in workplaces:

- Reduction of the immediate working day to 30 hours with the same monthly net salary and progressive reductions until unemployment ends.
- No pay-as-you-go, nor capitalized pension systems. For a system based on solidarity. For pensions that are sufficient and calculated exclusively according to the individual needs of each person.
- Against timekeeping, new forms of piecework, temporary work agencies and short time work intermediaries.

In the neighborhoods, we call for:

- The closure of gambling joints, the “Buy gold” shops, churches and cults, narcopisos (drug-flats) and all agents that promote the decomposition of our neighborhoods. For the opening of community centers for workers that are independent of the state, the trade unions and the mafias.

In the public political debate and in the face of ideological campaigns that are intended to trap workers, we will fight:

- Against any struggle that divides us into categories, such as sex, origin, age, race, mother tongue or anything else, or pretends that our interests and those of capitalism - national or global- are equal or convergent.

1st Congress of Emancipación, June 2019

IGCL Letter to the Emancipación on its 1st Congress

July 10th 2019

The IGCL to Emancipación,

Dear comrades,

In this letter, we would like to share with you the political balance-sheet we draw of the 1st Congress of Emancipación. This balance-sheet is based on the two documents you have published, *Informe del congreso*²² [Report of the Congress] and *Consignas* [slogans], on the Nuevo Curso website, and on the letter that the Congress wrote to us (which we dated 24 June) in response to our previous letter of 18 June. (...).

The constitution of Emancipación as a full communist political group is an important step whose political and historical significance goes far beyond the mere appearance of a new communist group. We have entered a period of massive confrontation between the classes due to the crisis and the prospect of generalized imperialist war, which the former is exacerbating every time more. The contradictions of capitalism are exploding one after the other, causing upheavals of all kinds at all levels of capitalist society. The revolutionary forces and more especially the *international proletarian camp*, the party in the making, are also not immune to it to the point of encountering great difficulties and seeing its contradictions and weaknesses also explode and to live a moment of profound reconfiguration precisely because of this new situation.

Therefore, the constitution of Emancipación as a full political group expresses the fact that the international proletariat, although generally submitted to bourgeois ideology and far from being able to repel the attacks of any kind imposed by capital, tends to resist through the struggle and to free itself from the ideological grip of the latter and that its revolutionary future remains relevant. It also expresses the dynamics and the struggle for the party within the forces of the proletarian camp, the fight that passes through confronting opportunism within its ranks – the most caricatured expression of which is still the ICC and its theory of *decomposition* and *parasitism* – and the interpellation of the other forces of the Communist Left so that they assume the responsibilities that history has given them – we think in particular here of the ICT despite its weaknesses and shortcomings (but also, modestly because of our reality, of ourselves). In this sense, the 1st Congress of Emancipación is an important event in the class struggle that should be welcomed and that will have to be developed and confirmed in the future. Because the particularity of communist activity is precisely that each new step successfully completed multiplies the responsibilities and tasks to come.

The Congress is all the more important as it appears that the constitution as a political group is accompanied by a taking of consciousness and a practical orientation so that Emancipación be a truly international communist group and not a "Spanish" or "regional" ones, nor limited to the Hispanic or Latin-speaking milieu alone, which was still partly present at the 1st conference in Nuevo Curso. This step, as you know, is fundamental for us: *"For us, we consider that any communist group must immediately consider itself as an expression of the international proletariat wherever and whenever it can intervene directly and physically, with obviously a particular responsibility in these places. That is why we believe that any communist group must "tend" – it is not an "absolute" that can be decreed but a process of political homogeneity and unity around the communist program – to constitute itself and act as a centralized international group"* (IGCL letter to the Liga Emancipación, August 2018).

It is therefore with enthusiasm and great hope that we have taken note of the work of the Congress and greet it. It is therefore also in the context of this fraternal and positive greeting that the following elements of criticism must be read, discussed and taken into consideration. We hope that these discussion points will be as useful to you as they are to us.

1) But first a "critical" question: the documents we have read do not mention the particular adoption of a political platform. Does the platform remain the platform of the *Liga Emancipación's Fundamental Bases*? If this is the case, then our comments at that time remain valid: *"As such, the Bases leave a wide political and even "programmatic" space in which different, distinct, divergent, and even contradictory political approaches can emerge, develop and "coexist" until the reality of class struggle come to require their clarification and make a decision between them. As a result, **the Bases can only be a moment, probably necessary, but temporary**, for the development of a "communist organization" to use your words"* (idem, we underline).

If this is not the case, the new platform should be published as soon as possible.

2) The *Report of the Congress*, which recounts the situation of capitalism today, makes no mention of the historical alternative of *international proletarian revolution or generalized imperialist war*. Therefore, it

²² . <http://emancipacion.info/i-congreso-de-emancipacion/>.

reduces its vision of the situation and makes it difficult to understand how Emancipación sees the current historical dynamics. Indeed, the historical alternative, and in particular the march to generalized war to which all national capitalist classes are forced, directly determines the evolution of the relation of forces between the classes. In this sense, the permanent relation of the proletariat to the perspective of war is also an element of the historical situation that makes it possible to analyse this relation of forces. The historical alternative is thus a "concrete" factor of the immediate situation by already determining today the imperialist policies and the attacks of the ruling class, their characteristics and intensity, against the proletariat. The absence of any mention to this alternative as well as any to the question of the proletariat's relation to the generalized imperialist war, is a weakness of the Congress according to us, at least of the document it adopted, while many of Nuevo Curso's public statements on its blog had been much more precise and complete from this point of view. It is difficult to know today whether there is a real disagreement between us. We will most certainly verify it in the future.

3) But above all, a significant divergence is there on the claim of the historical continuity. We knew that Nuevo Curso *tended* to claim the only Spanish Communist Left and more particularly the FOR of Munis. The Congress adopted the following: "*Our tendency is born as the International Communist Left, driven by the opposition of the Russian Left against the degeneration of the International. It constituted external fractions of the left (...). it founded the 4th International in 1938 when the path to a new world war was opened by the capitulation of the International without struggle against Nazism in 1933 and especially after the defeat of the Spanish Revolution in 1937...*" (<https://nuevocurso.org/nuestra-tendencia>). It is always more "difficult" to debate a position already adopted by the Congress and which, in fact, is more committing than before its adoption. We have probably failed to be vigilant with regard to our warning of August 2018, which we pointed out above, that the political definition of Emancipación was, in fact, still in progress, under process. We should have discussed this issue with you more directly before the Congress adopted this position, prematurely in our view. Whether or not we would have been able to convince you then, in any case it would have helped you to clarify your final position and its arguments and could you have taken a more coherent position than this one, which already contains and displays significant contradictions. For example, the letter sent to us by the Congress confuses the Communist Left with the Fourth International, even though the former has constantly criticized Trotsky's approach calling for the constitution of the Fourth in 1933: "*We are not the heirs of this particular tendency of the International Communist Left, but of the work of the Communist Left as a whole **and particularly of its main core**, which actively fought to oppose the revolution to the war already since the Spanish revolution (1936-1937) and which, through this defeat, created against the current a new International, the 4th...*" (letter from the Congress of Emancipación to the IGCL, received on June 24, we underline).

We will not enter here into the assertion according to which – if we understand the sentence correctly – the 4th International, founded in 1938, would have been the *main core* of the Communist Left even if it strongly surprises us from comrades who have already manifested so many times that they knew the history of the workers movement. Very surprising for us, however, is the affirmation of continuity with the 4th International and its belonging to the Communist Left. As much as it seems to us completely legitimate to claim Munis and Peret, of the FOR, who clearly located themselves on the positions of the Communist Left in 1948 **after their rupture** with the 4th International as the *Pro-Segundo Manifiesto Comunista* which they wrote and adopted, proves it without contest. As much as claiming the 4th International while it was founded on an openly opportunistic basis (after having practised the politics... of *entryism* into the Socialist Parties from 1934 onwards!) seems to us a profound and serious error, full of contradictions and negative consequences.

But above all, we want to call the attention of the comrades to the **programmatic, theoretical and political dead end** in which the claim of continuity with the 4th International is embarking Emancipación. It is possible that this dead end will not have immediate political consequences; albeit for a short time and apparently only. But there is little doubt that the contradiction, and confusion, between the class positions that Nuevo Curso defends with rigour and constancy, and brilliance too, on its blog on the one hand, and the programmatic heritage of the 4th International, will one day explode one way or another – the worst being that it explodes at a crucial moment, or even that the comrades get lost in the most total theoretical and political confusion, thus destroying all the efforts that NC has successfully made in recent years to encourage the emergence of new forces and to animate their international grouping.

The 4th International claimed the first four congresses of the Communist International. All the currents of the Communist Left claimed, more or less clearly, the first two congresses of the CI and all fought against the turning point achieved by the third: the adoption of the united front tactic "with the workers parties", i.e. with

the social democracy that had passed into the bourgeoisie's camp. There is no need here, and for the time being, to go back over the dramatic consequences of this tactic, which was only the first expression of the reflux of the revolutionary wave on the one hand and the penetration of opportunism into the ranks of the International. Nevertheless, to our knowledge, all the positions that NC and Emancipación have defended to date reject any form of frontism. And in general, NC's positions are on the ground of the Communist Left and in opposition, even in contradiction, to the programmatic and theoretical framework of the 4th international, both from its formal constitution, 1938, and from Trotsky's 1933 theses calling for its constitution.

It would be as dangerous to believe that we could neglect the close relation, in fact the unity, that must exist between the political positions that we put forward and the programmatic and theoretical framework to which we refer. If there is a contradiction between the two, it cannot fail to explode at one time or another, in one form or another. We therefore propose you that we hold a contradictory debate on this issue. In addition to clarifying the divergence, resolving it or fixing it "forever", this debate could also then be public so that it could serve as a political reference. We are convinced that this divergence and debate are not abstract or simply historical issues. The divergence not only contains immediate political implications (in the intervention and the question of demands [*"consignas"*] for example) but also corresponds to concrete questions and problems that today's workers' struggles already face.

As a result, we are not relaunching here the debate and divergence we had before your congress on the place and role of the ICT as an "historical" pole of reference-grouping – despite its weaknesses and hesitations, not to say its misunderstanding, to assume this role. Indeed, the understanding and position on this issue is closely dependent, and even determined, by the historical filiation to which each current or group is attached. If we claim the 4th International, it is difficult to accept, and even more so to understand, that one of the fundamental reasons why the ICT would occupy "objectively" such a place and would have such a role is precisely its historical, organic link – however weak it may be nowadays – with the CP and the Communist Left of Italy.

This, dear comrades, is the balance-sheet we have drawn from your congress and which we wanted to present to you. The transition to a full political group is extremely positive in itself and, at the same time, raises new questions and responsibilities. And it directly confronts us with the gaps and contradictions that we can all suffer. These appeared at the congress, including in the list and content of the slogans and immediate positions – such as the "*immediate reduction of the working day [actually week] to 30 hours*" and to which we will return occasionally – that appear in your presentation of the Congress. However, we cannot fail to believe that there is a close link between these slogans and some of the specific orientations adopted by the Congress on the one hand and, on the other hand, the 4th International's claim and its famous *Transitional Programme* – what is your position on it? Did you discuss it before or during the Congress? This is why your claim of continuity with the 4th must be debated – and in our opinion fought – to allow Emancipación and its members to clarify this question and their position as best we can in order to be able to participate actively and effectively in the historical task that the proletariat has entrusted to them.

Fraternal greetings, the International Group of the Communist Left.

New Points of Unity of the Gulf Coast Communist Fraction – June 2019

We publish here the new Points of Unity of the GCCF, which we make follow with the letter that we send to the comrades and which exposes some rapid comments.

1. Capitalism is a system based on the exploitation of the proletariat (laboring classes) by the bourgeoisie (property-owning classes), governed according to value-relations, structured by the generalization of commodity-production and wage-labor; whether manifested as managed by individual capitalists, private corporations, state enterprises, or workers' self-managed co-operatives.
2. The proletariat is a universal political subject that is the only class capable of ending the exploitation of 'Man' by 'Man', and it is the historic task of the proletariat to achieve this through the supersession of capitalism.
3. The movement towards the supersession of capitalism is defined as communism. Communism is the abolition of all social classes through the common ownership of the means of living and direct association of human subjects.
4. Communism can only be achieved by the proletariat seizing and consolidating political power for itself, wherein a transitional period follows that suppresses the economic relationships of capitalism. Communism cannot be gradually established through the administration of the capitalist state; communism presupposes the destruction of the capitalist state. All manifestations of capitalism (private, state, workers' self-managed) are equally opposed to the task of

communism. Additionally, the USSR (1921-1991), People's Republic of China, North Korea, Cuba, etc. are all examples of state-managed capitalism.

5. The Russian Revolution of 1917 was the highest expression of the proletariat in its effort to achieve its historic task.

6. A world communist party is a necessary body in order for the proletariat to seize political power.

7. Because communism is by definition an international system, the proletariat are necessarily an internationalist class. The proletariat unifies across, effectively dissolving, national boundaries when struggling on its own class terrain. Nationalism/chauvinism – the division of the proletariat based on national boundaries and the unification of the proletariat with exploiting classes based on national boundaries – is the most significant enemy to the internationalism that is a defining axis of the proletarian class terrain.

8. What is inherent to internationalism, the other side of the axis of the proletarian class terrain, is centralism. Without centralism, internationalism is merely an empty phrase. Whereas internationalism represents the geographic unification of the proletariat as a universal political subject, centralism expresses its organizational unification. Anti-centralism in its different incarnations are all enemies to the organizational unity of the proletariat: federalism, horizontalism, individualism, identitarianism (gender, sexuality, race, language), etc.

9. Capitalism has its opposing faces, or political wings; a left and a right-wing. The 'left-wing' of capital are the movements, organizations, and milieu that advocate for a modification of capitalism under the farcical guise of "communism" (democratic socialism, Marxism-Leninism/Stalinism, Maoism, Trotskyism, anarchism). Leftism (left-of-capital) either denies internationalism, centralism, or both, one way or the other; for that reason, the leftist milieu is firmly in the political camp of the bourgeoisie. Communists don't share any community with leftism.

10. Communists have concluded that, in the declining phase of capitalism, forming inter-classist fronts, coalitions, or collaborations of any kind, especially with the 'left-wing of capital', is a crossing of the class boundary defined by the principles of nationalism vs. internationalism/anti-centralism vs. centralism.

11. In the rising phase of capitalism, communists supported certain national independence movements on the condition that they would further the development of capitalism through the destruction of pre-capitalist forms, thus facilitating the unification and constitution of the proletariat as a political agent.

However, in the declining phase of capitalism, national liberation movements divide the proletariat up for warring imperialist factions, thus violating the principle of internationalism.

12. In the rising phase of capitalism, communists defended the importance of standing in bourgeois elections for the purpose of propaganda and attaining reforms that would help the proletariat establish its presence as a political agent; but in the declining phase of capitalism, communists recognize that running in elections is generally a poor tactic, albeit not necessarily always out of the question. What this does mean is that communists may stand in elections to expose the sham of bourgeois democracy, but supporting bourgeois electoral campaigns, or the accepting of bourgeois office, is a crossing of the class boundary.

13. In the rising phase of capitalism, communists understood that trade unions were defensive organs of the proletariat that assisted in establishing itself as an independent political agent, and that the struggle for immediate economic demands was an important component of the proletariat's development during a period when the development of productive forces had not yet exhausted their compatibility with the social relations. However, in the declining phase of capitalism, communists recognize trade unions to have been wholly integrated into the capitalist state, rendering them defensive organs of the capitalist firm that regulate the price of labor-power and sabotage the self-organization of the proletariat, and that the struggle for immediate economic demands must be unified with the struggle for political power in a period when the productive forces are in acute contradiction with the social relations. It is hypothetically possible for communists to collaborate with other communists who mistakenly think it's possible for communists to build from the ground-up unions that still have the function they had in the rising phase of capital, but to work with those who unionize and intervene on the behalf of the existing union-apparatus is to amount to working with those who act on the behalf of the state-apparatus.

14. Communists oppose individualist acts of appropriation that disorient/fragment the collectivity of the proletariat – such as looting, 'rioting', plundering, banditry, petty-thievery, etc. – because they are a clear violation of the principle of centralism.

15. Communists oppose the militarization of political struggle – such as guerrilla warfare, protracted people's war, focoism, etc. – because it's a clear abandonment of the class terrain of the proletariat, favoring the military terrain of the bourgeoisie.

The GCCF, June 2019

Letter to the GCCF on the New "Points of Unity"

July 20th 2019

The IGCL to the Gulf Coast Communist Fraction,

Dear comrades,

The GCCF has just published a new platform that you call “*points of unity*”. This shows that your new and young organization is a place for debates, discussions and also political confrontations. We strongly support and encourage that kind of political attitude because it is mostly through political confrontations that the new generation of militants will be able to reclaim the communist program. That is to say we do not have to avoid those confrontation, but rather to polarize them so that in the *party in the making* we will be able to separate clearly revolutionary positions from opportunism. This new platform is a major step towards reclaiming the left communist tradition if you compare it to the first platform that you published at the group’s formation. It particularly attempts to take back the historical method to base the positions, which was lacking in the first one. On that fact alone, the new platform must be greeted. But we also have much questions and critical comments to address you through what is only a fraternal contribution to improve the debate.

Your point #12 on democracy is quite a surprising position considering that the abstention from bourgeois democracy is share by almost all, if not all, left communist groups. You seem to claim the old “revolutionary parliamentarianism” position of the 3rd International. The problem with that position is that its aim, like you said : “*the sham to expose of bourgeois democracy*”, is not really realistic with that tactic. The participation of communists to bourgeois democracy tends to give credibility to the democratic institution, thus producing the exact opposite wanted effect. Of course, communist abstentionnism is different from anarchism. Anarchists are against parliamentarianism because there are apolitical, i.e they are against the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We are against parliamentarianism because we think that the new revolutionary power, i.e the dictatorship of the proletariat, must be established outside and against the parliament. Thus, there is no tactical efficiency to participate in bourgeois democracy since the revolution must destroy it. There is a really interesting booklet made by the ICP [so-called "Bordiguist"] which retraces the debate within the 3rd International during the 2nd Congress between “revolutionary parliamentarianism partisans” and “abstentionnism partisans”, but unfortunately it seems to be only in French.²³ There is also an English translation of the thesis that the Communist Abstentionnist Fraction defended at the 2nd Congress. Those thesis are still to this day a document that we must refer to on the question of elections.²⁴

The process that you describe in point #13 as : “*the struggle for immediate economic demands must be unified with the struggle for political power in a period when the productive forces are in acute contradiction with the social relations*” is the one of the *mass strike*. It has really well been explained by Rosa Luxemburg in *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions*²⁵ which a really important text to grasp the very dynamic of class struggle.

Still in point #13, you are right to characterize unions as “*wholly integrated to the capitalist state*”. But you make a formal distinction between what we would call “honest rank and file militants” and “union bureaucrats”. For sure there is some material and empirical basis for that distinction. But in the real struggles, things are not that simple nor mechanical. The problem with that distinction is that it makes a complete abstraction of the real needs and necessities of the actual struggles. The first necessity of every class struggle is unity and extension on a geographical basis. What do we do if, for instance, union bureaucrats are forced, for a period of time, to be for unity and extension? It would make no sense to outrightly denounce them at that very moment. In other words, the role of communist into immediate economic struggles is to strive for political unity and extension of the struggle, which is done most of the time against unions, of course. The real class boundaries into struggles are not between honest militant and dishonest bureaucrats. Honest rank and file workers can have shitty politics too. The real boundaries are between the ones that struggle for unity and extension and the ones that want to keep the struggle into capitalist limits (legality, corporatism, austerity, national interest and even sacred union towards war).

In point #15, you are right to oppose all those guerilla tactics because they are not at all in the communist tradition, but rather a third-worldist petit-bourgeois practice. But we think it would be a mistake to oppose the militarization of political struggle in general. There is a military aspect to class struggle, whether you like it or

23 http://www.pcinet.org/40_pdf/18_publication-pdf/FR/19_q-parlementaire-%20ic-2001-w.pdf

24 . <http://www.sinistra.net/lib/upt/compro/lipu/lipuhcabie.html>

25 . <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1906/mass-strike/>

not, for the simple reason that we must oppose to the bourgeois violence the proletarian violence. If you are against militarization in general, does it mean that you think that the Bolsheviks were wrong to establish the red army? We think it was a necessity for the revolution. Of course we can discuss how that army could be built, discipline, the relation of the army with the State, etc. but the principle of the red army in itself is a programmatic element. How it is written now, there is room to accommodate pacifism.

But it is the point #6 that we want to underline because it is a key and central question for communists. You affirm that *“a world communist party is a necessary body in order for the proletariat to seize political power”*. This formula is not clear enough nor does it say everything that it should. It leaves room and space for different understandings and positions. For instance, how should the proletariat seize the power? Through election and bourgeois democracy? Certainly not! That point would have been a great place to introduce the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is of prime importance. In the same vein, nothing is said about the insurrection, worker’s councils and the avant-garde role of the communist party within these organs. Also, where does the communist party come from? Is it a circle of intellectuals that must introduce socialism in the class or is it the part of the class that elevated itself to the communist program thus leads the rest of the class towards the revolution?

In relation to this question, we note that you use the word "supersession of capitalism" instead of "destruction of..." - except in point 4 where you talk about the *“destruction of the capitalist state”*. The use of "supersession", instead of "destruction", again can leave a large space for varied political understandings and positions until "opening the door", instead of closing it as a platform should, to several types of opportunist and even bourgeois, "radical" or leftist visions, on the proletariat's relationship to the capitalist state and its own class dictatorship. The precise drafting and formulation are not some kind of fussyness, formalism or an useless question but rather an issue of the political and theoretical struggle within the communist camp, particularly on the question of the conditions for the exercise of its political power by the proletariat. We refer to the struggle that the "Italian left" waged within the degenerating Communist International when it adopted the slogan "workers government" instead of "dictatorship of the proletariat" (cf. the Theses of Rome, for example, 1926).

As we have already pointed out, these new GCCF *Unity Points* represent a step forward in the process of communist political clarification. But, because of their lack of precision, the *Points* leave a large "space" for the different, divergent and sometimes even contradictory positions and understandings within the revolutionary camp; and above all, they also leave the door open – when on the contrary, they should close it – to leftist bourgeois visions and positions. We have no doubt that these differences cross the GCCF itself, consciously or unconsciously, thereby reducing its real political unity as a *full* political group. This observation confirms that, in our opinion, the GCCF is still in a phase of political clarification and definition rather than an already "established" communist group, even if it is not a question of making an absolute separation between the two phases. As we have already told you, a "discussion circle" can, and even must, intervene in the class struggle if necessary. Nevertheless, if it wants to be able to establish its political action and presence in the long term and if its members want to acquire the political and theoretical consciousness and conviction necessary for serious militant commitment, it needs a minimum of political homogeneity on basic positions. Thus, we believe that the conclusions of our letter of last October are still valid. *“We all are conscious that these positions are only a necessary moment, or step, in the process between political break with bourgeois leftist positions and ideology and the political clarification of the Communist Left positions. This inescapable process can only develop through (...) discussion and confrontation with the positions of the Communist Left (you refer to) in a systematic way; especially its main programmatic documents that the different currents of the Communist Left have produced [such as] the platforms that its organizational expressions of today have adopted. It is a practical and concrete way, because it is a militant one, to clarify and state on basic positions”* (our letter of October 24th 2018²⁶).

That is why we reiterate to you the proposal to open a systematic discussion, in which we are of course ready to participate, on the main political platforms of the Communist Left: those of the ICT and the ICC of origin. Any other proposal for discussion of Left programmatic documents will also be welcome. As an example, you can refer to the method used by the sympathizer Stavros of the Left as a whole then, now a member of our group, in *Revolution or War* #2 ²⁷.

Fraternally, the IGCL.

26 . Published on your website : <https://gulfcoastcommunistfraction.wordpress.com/2018/12/15/letter-from-the-international-group-of-the-communist-left/>.

27 . <http://igcl.org/Statement-on-the-ICT-and-ICC>.

Struggle against Opportunism

Letter to the Group *Internationalist Voice*

June 27th 2019

The International Group of the Communist Left to Internationalist Voice,

For more than a year now, you have been sending us your statements and addressing us as "dear comrades", which prevails between communist groups. Thus we would like to ask if you still consider the IGCL as "*an unprincipled and adventurous group*" whose "*campaigns only benefits the political police*" (see your May 11th 2014 communiqué *Solidarity with the ICC*²⁸), which would be quite contradictory and inconsequent with your now "fraternal" addresses. This statement was in continuity with the intervention and the correspondences that you had with Klasbatalo (Internationalist Communists of Montreal) in 2012 while it was discussing with the ex-Internal Fraction of the ICC, that is the Fraction of the International Communist Left. Again, for you at the time, "*the actions of these people ("IFCL") have been discrediting of the International Communist Current and they coded the name of their polluting companies creating of "fraction" and saving of the ICC (sic)*". At least at the time, you were consequent and coherent with your call to the young comrades of Klasbatalo that "*the precondition for a political debate with you is that you put your practice on serious criticism and publicly reject the actions of groups like "IFCL"*" (Reply to Klasbatalo, *Int. Voice*, October 15th 2011²⁹). You cannot ignore that Klasbatalo and the (actually) FICL ("*these people*" that the ICC was denouncing publicly in its international press as cops, provocateurs, gangsters, thieves, nazis, etc.) dissolved as specific groups and their members constituted the present IGCL in 2013.

So, we are wondering what political significance your 180 degree turn (*these people to dear comrades*) has. Is it due to a sincere conviction that you were wrong in following the ICC slanders and accusations and, above all, in sticking to its destructive theory of parasitism ? Or is it due to a vulgar attempt to break with your international isolation and with some kind of political distrust you have provoked all over the years among the other groups of the Proletarian Camp with your opportunist (in the vulgar meaning of the word) behaviour regarding the latter and particularly the ICC.

In the first case, we would welcome it only if you had publicly made a critical appraisal of your policy. Why do you now reject the theory of parasitism and what were the conditions for its adoption by you at the time ? What error of principle and method did you make ? That is how we consider the political responsibility that the revolutionaries owe to their class. If you now reject "parasitism", you have to explain it publicly.

Now, as "open" as we can be, we cannot exclude the alternative : a vulgar tactic to break with international and political isolation. Why ? Because **you are the only group** claiming to be part of the Communist Left **that has publicly and constantly supported the destructive actions of the ICC** towards its former members, particularly when they refused to resign and carried on as communist militants³⁰. And, because **you were the only ones to actually support the ICC theory of parasitism and its political and personal consequences**.

If the young comrades of Klasbatalo had followed your orientation at the time and respected your "preconditions", you would not be able to call them now "dear comrades" since they would certainly no longer be active militants, as is true of most of the young and new revolutionaries that the ICC had integrated in the 2000s all around the world... precisely on the basis of the theory of parasitism and the clans and under the "precondition" that they all denounced firstly the... Internal Fraction of the ICC and then the IGCL, the very words you addressed to Klasbatalo.

If the introduction of the opportunist, petty-bourgeois and destructive theory of parasitism within the Proletarian Camp had not been defeated – as even the ICC now publicly acknowledged it has – then the Resolution presented at its 16th congress in 2005 calling for the destruction of the then IBRP, today ICT, would have continued and provoked more destruction of communist forces and convictions. In fact, you have been, **at least objectively**, if we accept to still give you some credit, the only "allies" of the attempt to destroy and liquidate the main forces of the Proletarian Camp.

You owe explanations, and clarification, to the international proletariat and the whole communist camp.

Communist Greetings, the IGCL (*Revolution or War*)

28 <https://internationalist.ueuo.com/en/texts/SolidarityICC.htm>

29 <https://internationalist.ueuo.com/en/texts/Klasbatalo.htm>

30 While, for instance, the two main other groups of the Communist Left at the time, the IBRP and the ICP-Le Proletaire, denounced the methods of the ICC and rejected its accusations against the excluded members.

The Internationalist Voice's "Response"

"Unfortunately due to an irresponsible act of old Klasbatalo, this email account has been added to our distribution list, as email address of Klasbatalo not IGCL. Now we have corrected the mistake and removed this email address from our distribution list. Internationalist Voice."

And it joins us the copy of the allegedly *irresponsible* sending of Klasbatalo after its dissolution and the constitution of the IGCL at the end of 2013! "Dear comrades, our new email is intleftcom@gmail.com. Internationalist Greetings". The reader can assess the seriousness of the *irresponsible act* – informing the closure of one address and the opening of another –, the seriousness of the accusation and the trouble it may have caused in the soul, let us say kindly, *troubled* – by the theory of *parasitism* and *clanism*? - of Internationalist Voice. And the absence of any political character to this answer.

Balance-sheet and Perspectives of the 23rd Congress of the ICC: To Introduce the Poison of the Opportunist and Destructive Theory of *Parasitism* among the New Revolutionary Forces.

The International Communist Current publishes several documents of its 23rd Congress³¹. We can only be surprised, pleasantly for sure, whereas it had been unusually discreet to report on the previous Congress, the 22nd, in 2017. Only the Resolution on the International Situation was published in the *International Review* of this organization at the time. No presentation, no balance-sheet, of the 22nd had been presented, probably to avoid mentioning that the congress, too divided, had not been able to take a position on the Report of activities that was proposed. On the other hand, this 23rd Congress is of particular importance: the ICC officially abandons the *Historical Course*, a fundamental point of its theoretical and political contribution since its origins. We must therefore take a closer look at this before addressing the real political issues of this meeting.

The 23rd Congress Abandons the "Historical Course" and Liquidates even more the Class Struggle

Anyone who reads all the Resolutions and the Report on the international situation³², risks getting lost in various and varied abstract considerations, such as the one on *the loss of class identity* (Report on the class struggle), and often contradictory. In the middle of this jumble that runs over dozens of pages, the reader may miss the only real interest, or political stake, of these documents: *"the notion of 'historical course' is no longer able to define the situation of the current world and the balance of forces between the*

bourgeoisie and the proletariat [because the course] defined the outcome of a historical trend: either world war or class confrontations" (Resolution on the international situation). The *historical course* has always been a particular position of the ICC and, as such, an essential element of its theoretical and political legacy on which it based its perspectives and analyses. Its official abandonment today does not surprise us because the *notion of historical course* was in contradiction with the positions of the ICC of the 21st century since, according to the latter, *"the spectre of world war no longer haunts the planet"*³³. If there is no longer any historical alternative *revolution or war*, then inevitably the opportunist ICC of today could not end up, sooner or later, but to officially get rid of the *historical course*.

The organizational crisis of 2001-2002 had led to the definitive success of the idealist theory of the *Decomposition of capitalism* and the equally definitive control, the internal opposition being denounced and violently excluded for its so-called... *clanism* and *parasitism*, of an openly opportunist dynamics upon this organization. The political and principle consequences were not long in coming. As early as 2003, the 15th Congress had substituted for the historical alternative *revolution or war* that of a third way, the eternal proposal of opportunism, *"a third alternative: the destruction of humanity not through an apocalyptic war, but through the gradual advance of decomposition"* (Resolution of the 15th Congress). Subsequent congresses only continued the systematic revision of the positions inherited by the ICC from the Communist Left until it denied any possibility of generalized imperialist war³⁴. The

31 . <https://en.internationalism.org/content/16702/reports-and-resolutions-23rd-congress-icc>.

32 . [Resolution on the International Situation](#), [Resolution on the Balance of Forces between the Classes](#) and the [Report on the class struggle](#).

33 . *International Review* #130, Resolution on the international situation of the 17th Congress, 2007.

34 . The reader who would like to know the history of this rise to

practical political consequences of *the struggle against the effects of decomposition* were repeated and increasing statements at the same side of the bourgeoisie: denunciation of the wild strike at the Opel factory in Bochum, Germany, in October 2004, support for the bourgeois campaigns of solidarity with the victims of the tsunami of December 2004 in Asia, solidarity with the CRS (the French riot police) injured in the demonstrations during the student mobilization against the CPE in 2006... – we are forced to limit our list – up to the denunciation of the reactions of the *yellow vests* in France to the violent and massive state repression³⁵; and this under the argument, astounding of platitude but expressing so much the petty-bourgeois' panic at the inevitability of violence in the future class confrontations, according to which "*violence can only generate violence*"!

Does this mean that the ICC has finally been convinced by the arguments of the other components of the Communist Left, primarily the Internationalist Communist Tendency, which reject and fight the notion of the *historical course* and the method that goes with it? Not at all. Its rejection is of a different class nature because it is based on the questioning of the very principle and reality of class struggle: "*It is mainly (...) the fact that decomposition tends to become the decisive factor in the evolution of society, and therefore of all the components of the world situation (...) that constitutes the major thrust of this resolution. (...) After [1989], this dynamic is no longer determined by the balance of forces between classes. Whatever the balance of forces, world war is no longer on the agenda, but capitalism will continue to sink into decay*"³⁶ (idem, we underline)

One of the central political principles of *Marxism*, historical materialism, and the communist program according to which *the class struggle is the motor force of history*, could not be more clearly betrayed. Class struggle is not just one phenomenon amongst

the paradise of political opportunism can refer to this text from the Internal Fraction of the ICC, http://fractioncommuniste.org/ficci_fra/b49/b49_5.php, only in French or Spanish and more broadly to the summaries: http://fractioncommuniste.org/index_eng.php?SEC=b00, even though not all the articles had been translated to English.

35 . "*Petanque balls and other projectiles to counter intensive tear gas bombardment are totally ineffective and can only contribute to the escalation of violence, social chaos and the strengthening of the police state*" (<https://en.internationalism.org/content/16621/police-violence-riots-urban-guerrillas-looting-real-cause-chaos-and-violence>).

36 . The French version uses the word *decomposition* and not *decay*, which are for the ICC theory two different phases of capitalism. The change can't be "by chance". A specific English "opportunist" concession since decomposition is rejected "*by the other groups of the communist left*" ?

others of the historical dynamics and "*the world will go towards war or revolution (...) only as the result of the balance of power between the ruling class and the subordinate class. (...) The only valid yardstick is to evaluate the balance of power between the classes*"³⁷ (ICT)³⁸. This vision according to which *decomposition* is the decisive factor of society cannot fail to replace the struggle between classes, i.e. between material and historical forces, by the struggle against an idea or a notion, and beyond the classes since the bourgeoisie itself suffers decomposition. The step to be taken for class collaboration is a very small one and will not fail to be taken at the slightest social turmoil. Wasn't it already crossed during the Opel strike, the 2004 Asian tsunami, the solidarity shown with the wounded police officers, etc.³⁹?

Breaking its Isolation in order to Be Able to Hinder and Destroy the Party in the Making

But this was not the real issue of this Congress. To discover it, it is necessary to come back to an article of the ICC itself which exposes – unconsciously? – the contradictions and considerable weakening of today's ICC. Although not presented as such, this text, *The Difficult Evolution of the Proletarian Political Milieu (part 2)*⁴⁰ published last June (only in English update) is in fact the real report and balance-sheet of activities for the 23rd Congress. It looks back at the crises caused by the various so-called clans, always destroyed and constantly rising back from the ashes, which would have attacked the ICC throughout its history. In this way, it tries to reintroduce the theory – destructive for the revolutionary groups and militants – of *political parasitism*. It can be summarized as follows:

The impact of the *Decomposition* would explain the growth of *parasitism* in the ranks of the Communist Left. Despite its efforts, the ICC failed to convince

37 . *A Decade since the Financial Crisis* in which the ICT rejects the notion of historical course and our response *The Question of the Historical Course*. Both texts are published in *Revolution or War* #11 and are only a moment of the debate on this question that refers to the method of analysis of the dynamics of the class struggle. We invite the readers to refer to it.

38 . Some comrades regularly ask us about the reasons why we make a difference between the respective dynamics of the ICT, despite our differences with it, and the ICC. Among these is precisely the fact that the ICT always remains faithful to the essential principles of the communist programme, whatever criticisms we may make of some of its statements, including when these ones open the door to opportunism (see, for example, certain positions on Anarchism).

39 . We can't develop each point here. We refer to the *International Communist Bulletin* of the IFICC.

40 . https://en.internationalism.org/content/16688/fifty-years-ago-may-68-difficult-evolution-proletarian-political-milieu-part-2#_ftn1

the other components of the Left, including the IBPR, now the ICT, of this danger to the point that they all went "from neutrality [towards parasitic groups] to tolerance and then to active cooperation with such elements". While "the response of a communist milieu (...) would be to exclude such [groups] from the proletarian camp", it is, according to the article itself, the ICC that found itself isolated! "Their principal aim [that of the parasites] has been to build a wall around the ICC, to isolate it from other communist groups and turn newly emerging elements away from engaging with us". In short, the outcome of the ICC struggle against *parasitism* outside its own ranks since at least two decades is a complete fiasco.

And the article goes on, thus acknowledging the extent of the theoretical and political rout, that the ICC's reaction was then **sectarian and opportunist**: "This was the sectarian side of our reaction. But again, it also had an opportunist side"⁴¹. Has the writer been struck at his turn by *parasitism* and *clanism* to dare to take up our own political characterisations of the drift of the ICC⁴²? Let's move on. In what way was the reaction struck by opportunism according to the text?

"In order to convince the new milieu [that is the new forces and generations of militants] *that we were not [underlined in the text] sectarian, in 2012 we made fresh overtures to the ICT (...). And in the end the discussions we started with the ICT soon foundered on this so far unbridgeable gap on the question of parasitism – the question of which groups and elements can be considered as legitimate components of the communist left. And this was not the only example of a tendency on the ICC's part to push to one side this vital question because it was decidedly unpopular in the proletarian milieu" (we underline). And the article to indicate that the integration of the Turkish section was a failure, precisely because they "never agreed with us on the question of parasitism".*

Reading these passages, we better understand the contradictions, all related to its political opportunism, that the ICC's recent activity is trying to address and what its immediate objective is: to break political isolation. But why today? Because "we are also seeing a renewed process of communist politicisation

*in a small but significant minority of this new generation, often taking the form of a direct interaction with the communist left. Individuals searching for clarification as well as new groups and circles have appeared in the USA in particular, but also in Australia, Britain, South America (...). Like the new elements who appeared a decade or so ago, this emerging milieu is faced by many dangers, not least from the **diplomatic offensive towards them of certain parasitic groups** and the indulgence shown towards the latter by proletarian organisations like the ICT".*

The diplomatic offensive referred to in the article here has consisted, on the part of the ICT and ourselves, in welcoming the emergence of new comrades in America under the impetus of the Spanish blog Nuevo Curso, and in initiating a process of **public** political debates and clarifications (see *Revolution or War* #9, 10 and 11) of the positions and programme of the Communist Left in order to bring these forces together in the historical struggle for the party. A year and a half later, in close symbiosis with its *satellite in parasitism Internationalist Voice*, the ICC is now launching a genuine *parasitic attack* – to use its own words – on these forces, particularly the Gulf Coast Communist Fraction, trying to convince them to discuss *parasitism* in priority. It does not matter for the ICC that the GCCF's is opposed to this position, the very fact it has succeeded in getting them to accept a meeting on this theme, **instead of political issues related to the Communist Left's experience and programmatic lessons**, is already in itself a trap for new forces without experience. Because debating the validity or not of *parasitism* with the ICC inevitably moves away from the political terrain, debates and political relations, to the benefit of the one, nauseating and destructive, of the psychology of individuals and supposed individual behaviour – which comrades cannot verify anyway and to which the "accused" can only respond by falling on the same ground. Whether in agreement or disagreement with *parasitism*, the trap inevitably closes and this discussion cannot but sow confusion and dismay, derail from the essential work of historical re-appropriation and political clarification of the experiences of the Communist Left and undertake to destroy the enthusiasm and political convictions of young comrades, circles and groups.

This is the true political significance of the 23rd Congress. Then, that the ICC has taken advantage of its holding to liquidate even further its historical principles and positions, there the *historical course*, is for the moment anecdotal. The main stake of the 23rd Congress was to mobilize the last remaining forces and energies of the ICC to undermine the

41 . To the point of calling for the destruction of the IBPR, today ICT : « if we say that the groups of the Proletarian Political Milieu have a destructive attitude, **we must discredit them politically** (...) what matters is to **discredit** the IBPR (...) that **it disappears** at the political level. If this policy ends up with its physical disappearance, **it is all the better**" (Extracts of the Resolution of the 16th Congress of the ICC in 2005 that was supposed to remain "secret" : http://fractioncommuniste.org/eng/bci07/bci07_8.php).

42 . See *Revolution or War* #1 et 5, as well as the statements and constant and various warnings of the International Fraction of the ICC in the years 2000.

political reflection and conviction of the new comrades, to hinder and sabotage the indispensable work of programmatic re-appropriation of the Communist Left and political clarification of its positions, and to sow confusion, disorientation and mistrust among these young revolutionaries vis-à-vis

the other forces of the Communist Left.

If the notion of *parasitism* had any political value, then the ICC of the 21st Century, and particularly of today, would be its most dangerous expression and incarnation.

The IGCL, July 2019

Historical and theoretical impasse of the ICC theory of the social decomposition phase (International Fraction of the ICC, 2005).

We are republishing here a 2005 IFICC text that quickly reviews the genesis of the adoption of the theory of Decomposition by the ICC in the 1990s. It seems important to us to arm the younger generations of revolutionaries, as well as the not-so-young, against this theory, which was the theoretical and political vector for the penetration of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology into the ICC and for the rise of its opportunist course that everyone can see today. Beyond the capacity of the ICC itself to be able to introduce this ideology into the proletarian camp, there is little doubt that, in one form or another, a flag or another such as Decomposition, opportunism will continue to try to penetrate the communist ranks and "thoughts". The FICCI's fight, with its strengths and weaknesses, against the theory of Decomposition is an experience that can be useful today and for the future.

This text highlights how Decomposition can only lead to the questioning of the historical alternative, the perspective of generalized imperialist war and the notion of "historical course" that the ICC has just abandoned. He also briefly mentioned how it made it possible to introduce the notions of clans – according to the ICC, the source of all organizational crises since the confrontation between Marx and Bakunin in the 1st International – and parasitism. Finally, it should be made clear to the reader that while we share the substance of the IFICC's criticism, the IGCL does not set itself in the same fight today – that of the ICC fraction – and that we do not necessarily share all the points and arguments that this text develops.

Since some 15 years, the International Communist Current had defended that capitalism had entered into a new and last phase of its evolution: the phase of social decomposition⁽⁴³⁾. At its origin, the ICC defined it as the last stage within capitalism decadence with some new and particular features. Actually, and contrary to the theory of the decadence which is one of the foundations of the ICC principles and which finds its roots within the development of marxism since more than a century⁽⁴⁴⁾, the theory of decomposition constitutes a particular theoretical development of the ICC. It has no precedent in its foundation despite the fact the ICC tried to link it with all the previous theoretical developments, and in particular with the theory of decadence. These last years, and every time in an accelerated manner, the theory of decomposition has been presented in terms which are opposed to the very basic principles of marxism⁽⁴⁵⁾. Thus, it

unfortunately became a additional expression of the tendency towards the political degeneracy of this organization.

For the ICC, the beginning of the phase of social decomposition has its fundamental cause in a "blockage", or *historical impasse*⁽⁴⁶⁾, in which the bourgeoisie and the proletariat got stuck. The 1990 thesis on decomposition turn precisely around this notion of historical blockage as foundation for decomposition :

"Decomposition is thus the result (...) [amongst other historical facts, of] the capitalist economy's 20 year dive into a new open crisis, without the bourgeois being able to take it to its logical conclusion (which of course is not a solution) - world war - due to their inability to control the working class.

*4) This last point is precisely **the new, specific, and unprecedented element which in the last instance has determined decadent capitalism's entry into a new phase of its own history: decomposition.** The open crisis which developed at the end of the 1960's,*

43 . The Thesis on decomposition were published in the *International Review* 62, 1990. They were republished in the *Review* 107. They synthesized the theory of decomposition which was discussed for some time yet.

44 . It's what we tried to show in our serie on the capitalism decadence (see our bulletins 19, 20 and 22, *Imperialist War or Proletarian Revolution : the Decadence of Capitalism and Marxism*, not translated into english).

45 . See our bulletin 25 : *In the serie "Rome is no more in Rome" : The historical falsifications and betrayals of the International Review 117* (translated into english) and bulletin

26 *Revolucion Mundial 79 : Or how the proletariat of the peripheral countries is lost for the revolution... And how United-States are the only ones to oppose to chaos !* (not translated into english).

46 . The word used at the origin in french is *impasse*. In French, in Spanish and english too, the ICC has used also the term *blockage*

as a result of the end of the post-World War II reconstruction period, opened the way once again to the historic alternative: world war or generalised class confrontations leading to the proletarian revolution. Unlike the open crisis of the 1930's, the present crisis has developed at a time when the working class is no longer weighed down by the counter-revolution. With its historic resurgence from 1968 onwards, the class has proven that the bourgeoisie did not have its hands free to unleash a Third World War. At the same time, although the proletariat has been strong enough to prevent this from happening, it is still unable to overthrow capitalism, since:

* the crisis is developing at a much slower rhythm than in the past;

* the development of its consciousness and of its political organisations has been set back (...).

In this situation, where society's two decisive - and antagonistic - classes confront each other without either being able to impose its own definitive response, history nonetheless does not just come to a stop. (...) As a crisis-ridden capitalism's contradictions can only get deeper, **the bourgeoisie's inability to offer the slightest perspective for society as a whole, and the proletariat's inability, for the moment, openly to set forward its own can only lead to a situation of generalised decomposition.** Capitalism is rotting on its feet.

5) (...) By contrast, in a historical situation where the working class is not yet capable of entering the combat for its own, and the only "realistic" perspective - the communist revolution - but where the ruling class is not able either to put forward the slightest perspective of its own, even in the short term, the latter's previous ability during the period of decadence to limit and control the phenomenon of decomposition cannot help but collapse under the repeated blows of the crisis. (...)

6) Thus, even if the phase of decomposition appears as the conclusion, the synthesis of all the successive contradictions and expressions of capitalist decadence (...). **This phase of decomposition is fundamentally determined by unprecedented and unexpected historical conditions: a situation of temporary "social stalemate" due to the mutual "neutralisation" of the two fundamental classes, each preventing the other from providing a definitive response to the capitalist crisis.** The expressions of this decomposition, the conditions of its evolution and its implications can only be examined by putting this factor in the forefront".

(Theses on decomposition, *International Review* 62, 1990, see the english pages of the ICC web site, underlined by us)

Thus the theory of decomposition defines the entry of capitalism into a **new historical phase** which would have begun from the end of the years 1980 (the collapse of the Eastern bloc would be the definitive mark of the entrance into decomposition even though its origin would go back to some years beforehand) up until the end of capitalism. This phase of decomposition, the last and definitive one for capitalism, would be caused by a **momentary phenomenon** : the impasse in which is the historical alternative presented by the bourgeoisie and the proletariat of war or revolution, "a situation of temporary "social stalemate" due to the mutual "neutralisation" of the two fundamental classes".

As long as the ICC didn't forget that the "historical impasse" [the "historical stalemate"], the "mutual neutralisation of the two fundamental classes" was not but a momentary phenomenon which will finish to give place to a new dynamic situation in which the path towards an historical solution to the capitalist crisis (generalised imperialist war or international proletarian revolution) will clearly express again, this notion succeeded to explain the turning situation we were actually living : the disappearance of the old set of imperialist blocs (USA-USSR) which temporarily put away the perspective of a third world war and which produced a terrible decline in the consciousness and in the struggle of the whole working class.

But now, the fundamental problem with the theory of decomposition is precisely that it developed up until stopping to consider the "historical impasse" as a "momentary" phenomenon and considering it as a definitive characteristic feature, as THE permanent characteristic of the present historical phase.

It's true that - in society or in nature - a "momentary" phenomenon can produce, can give place to, a "permanent" situation. In this sense, this "momentary blockage" as **cause** couldn't be understood but as a point of departure, as a "detonator" of the new historical phase. But in no way as the **characteristic** of the phase. Because, otherwise we would fall into a logical nonsense : the "momentary" situation would be at the same time "permanent".

Unfortunately, this evolution developed not through an open debate with two explicit different positions in struggle, but as a constant fluctuation in the statements on the international situation and in the orientations of the ICC. We can clearly verify it with a look back to the editorials of the *International Review*. For instance, this fluctuation can be seen in relation to the possibility or not for a new set of imperialist blocs and, thus, in relation to the

possibility that the bourgeoisie can or can't march again towards "its" solution to the economical crisis : the generalised imperialist war. During several years, this question remained "open" within the ICC even though the idea according to which the "chaos" and the "each one for himself" will impose against the tendency to form this new set of imperialist blocs, has progressively dominated.

We already brought to the fore that the theory of decomposition has evolved, these last years, towards denying every time more the historical alternative of generalised imperialist war or world proletarian revolution. At the beginning, the ICC was trying to put the alternative in accordance with the theory of decomposition. We refer to the quotation of the *International Review* 62 we reproduced above, or to this one which ends the Thesis on decomposition :

"17) (...) Understanding the serious threat that the historical phenomenon of decomposition poses for the working class and for the whole of humanity should not lead the class, and especially its revolutionary minorities, to adopt a fatalist attitude. Today, the historical perspective remains completely open. (...) The same factor which is at the origin of the decomposition (47), the inexorable aggravation of the capitalist crisis, constitutes the essential stimulant for the class' struggle and development of consciousness" (idem).

As far as the blockage of the society is theoretically expressed, not as an historically momentary phenomenon, but rather as a "constant", this "fatalism" against which the ICC prevented itself in 1990 increasingly wins more space in its present statements and articles : the *"phenomenon of generalised decomposition, of the putrefaction of society is caused by the fact that the contradictions of capitalism can only worsen, the bourgeoisie being incapable of offering the least perspective to the whole of society and the proletariat unable to affirm its own perspective in an immediate way.(...) **The process of the destruction of humanity, under the effects of Decomposition, even though long and disguised, is irreversible (...). Today the proletariat faces the more long term, but in the end no less dangerous threat of a 'death by a thousand cuts', in which the working class is increasingly ground down by the whole process** [of decomposition" says the french version] to the point where it has lost the ability to affirm itself as a class, while capitalism*

47 . This sentence we translate, isn't in the english version of the thesis whose original version is the french one. It's worth noting the (unconscious ?) tendency or reluctance of the english translators to use as much as the french writers the term "decomposition". It doesn't appear up until one makes attention as we do when we look for the english version of the quotations [english version note].

plunges from catastrophe to catastrophe" (*Marxism at the roots of the concept of capitalism's decomposition, International Review* 117, 2004, underlined by us).

Coming back on the theoretical elements which found this political "fatalism" which invades every time more the present ICC, we had to get back to the origin of the theory of decomposition. We could notice that some of its ulterior developments, made by the ICC, could not but drive towards a **theoretical impasse** from which one can escape only by questioning the very theory of decomposition. It's to this necessary reflection we want to call the attention of all the comrades of the ICC who haven't yet lost any critical spirit. They should publicly state, forgetting at least for once, the fact that those who bring it to the fore are officially considered by the ICC as hooligans, thieves, gangsters, betrayers, stalinists, nazis, snitchers for the police and, as such, indignous of any argued political response. Thus what does this theoretical impasse consist in ?

There is a logical nonsense in this theory. How is it possible that a **definitive** historical phase - it means long-lasting, permanent up until the end of capitalism - can have as essential, constant, characteristic and feature a **momentary** phenomenon ?

This logical nonsense can't end up but in the two following solutions :

- whether the *impasse*, the historical impasse - considered as momentary, temporary - is followed by a new dynamic situation, it means a new course opened to the historical alternative of war or revolution, and then the mentioned characteristic for decomposition disappears ;

- whether the historical impasse stops to be "momentary" and it reveals to be a permanent situation, and then the historical alternative vanishes (there is no possibility for a new generalized imperialist war and, in the same time, the conditions for the proletarian revolution go away always more). Capitalism collapses and humanity enters into an irreversible process of destruction. Without expressing it clearly and frankly, it's nevertheless the theoretical path the present ICC is following.

These last years in the ICC, the influence of the theory of decomposition has strenghtened itself to the detriment of the attention for the moment when the movement of the fundamental classes will bring back again in the forefront the historical alternative (with an increased tendency to the giving-up of the analysis and the following of the economical crisis and the imperialist conflicts which tended to the formation of new blocs, with a growing distance and a growing

"indifferentism", indeed a contempt, for the expressions of workers struggles). Finally, when the historical situation has opened up in 2001 - with the revival of the proletarian struggles (Argentina, France, etc.) and with the march towards war from part of the bourgeoisie (marked with the fall of the New-York Twin Towers) - in order this contradiction could find its solution in a clear, frank and open debate, this possibility kept blocked with the break-up of the new organizational crisis of the ICC. At that moment (September 2001, see our bulletins 4, 5 and 6⁴⁸), the alternative analysis about the revival of the classes struggle and about the march towards war of the comrades who were going to form the fraction, were received with attention and sympathy by quite a good part of the organization.

In 2004, the "Decomposition" (today with a D according to the *International Review* 117) has become for the present ICC *"the central factor of the evolution of the whole of society"* (sic). But then, the historical impasse which was firstly defined only as "momentary", must be now considered - explicitly or implicitly - as a phenomenon also permanent. From here, the increasingly strong and open tendency in the present ICC publications for despise or hide any event which is opposed to this theory and to replace theoretically the basic marxist vision of the historical alternative "war or revolution", by a vision which comes close not only to the "collapse" theories we still find within the marxist camp (⁴⁹), but also the theories coming from the fundamentalist sects which predict the inevitable end of the world.

Moreover, the liquidationist faction which ended by seizing the leadership of the ICC, begun to base its "disciplinary" measures on the theory according to which the social decomposition produces too a permanent tendency to the formation of clans within the revolutionary organisation which needs, according to it, a special "vigilance" and a permanent struggle against those supposed clans. But with this theory, has been eliminated the possibility that not only tendencies or fractions within a revolutionary organization, but also disagreements and serious contradictory debates can exist. Since, now on, it's enough to label every divergence, tendency or

fraction as "tendency towards clanism" to bury it and to sanction or to "bring its representatives to heel".

Here is how, though the ICC has not yet modified its political program so as to include into it the theory of decomposition, this one has converted to a dogma, to an article of faith which can't be criticized within the organization as reveals it the new "striking denunciation" of the liquidationist faction against the members of our fraction who "now criticize this theory after having voted during years different resolutions in which they accepted it". Actually this "denunciation" is directed to the present ICC militants because they all have also voted these resolutions all along these years. It means they too can't begin any criticism of the theory of decomposition in the "official" framework without risking to be accused at their turn to be renegades, to be "weather vane" [of changing their mind with the wind], to be adepts of the "double language", since they would withdraw from their past vote. Then they would be led to an open and frontal political struggle against the liquidationist faction which will necessarily utilize the same methods at the organizational level than the ones it utilized against our fraction.

Given the importance of the questions of principles which are today betrayed, given the degree of revision of programatical positions of the ICC, given the giving-up of the most elementary "classical" positions of the workers movement, any internal political struggle which would want to be consequent, militant, communist, won't be but an organizational struggle. And it won't be able to develop but through the constitution of an organized minority within the ICC, in this case in fraction... exactly what has been liquidated and forbidden for ever in 2001 by the policy and the methods utilized by the liquidationist faction and accepted passively by the majority of the militants.

The Internal Fraction of the ICC, February 2005.

48 . The New world situation and the present tasks for the revolutionaries (*bulletin n°4, December 2001, translated into english*) ; In front of the crisis and in front of the militarist response of the bourgeoisie, the struggles in Argentina confirm the perspective towards decisive confrontations between the classes (*bulletin n°5, January 2002, not in english*) ; Statement on the international situation (*for the International Bureau Plenum of the ICC, bulletin n°6, February 2002, not in english*).

49 . The same as footnote 3. See too *Automatic Collapse of Capitalism or Proletarian Revolution* in bulletin 26, not translated in english.

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 statified 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 organizations (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 organization, 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 organization 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 organized 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 nationalization 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 organization constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active factor in the generalization of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organize 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.
- Organized intervention, united and centralized 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 organizations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organizations 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