

# REVOLUTION or WAR #3

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E-mail : [intleftcom@gmail.com](mailto:intleftcom@gmail.com)

[www.igcl.org](http://www.igcl.org)

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### ***Call on Support***

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## **Charlie, The January 11<sup>th</sup> Demonstration in Paris and Syriza Coming to Power in Greece : Capitalism Provokes the Beginning of Massive Confrontations with the Proletariat**

The slaughter committed in Paris against the newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and the national and international reactions which followed, mark a turning point in the historical situation. A “pre and post” situation. No matter who are those directly responsible – Islamic terrorist groups – or indirectly – State and secret services – for these attacks and the imperialist dimension which lies behind, they always are linked with capitalist and state forces. That is anti-working class forces. This dramatic event means that the bourgeoisie has engaged a head-on and massive ideological and political offensive against the international proletariat. Here is what the unheard of situation of the organization of a demonstration of millions of people behind more than 40 Heads of State in Paris January 11<sup>th</sup> illustrates. And here is what the media promotion of the European “radical” Left after the coming to power of the extreme-left Syriza in Greece confirms.

Driven by the inexorable worsening of its economic crisis and by the exacerbation of the imperialist rivalries, the bourgeoisie has no choice but to engage in massive confrontations against the international proletariat to lead it to a new world war. Although the great masses of the both exploited and revolutionary class still remain sensible to bourgeois ideology, they don’t really adhere to, nor get behind, the capitalist States<sup>2</sup>. The support and a minimum of national unity behind each bourgeoisie are the conditions for Capital to engage in a march towards generalized imperialist war. These can’t be got but through an historic defeat of the working class. An historic defeat? This means at the cost of an ideological, political and “physical”, that is bloody, defeat, like the defeats during the 1920s and 1930s which led the world into the horror and barbarity of World War 2.

We are not there yet. The working class continues to develop a dynamic of struggle against the effects of the economic crisis. In this regard, it represents a major obstacle to the capitalist class. Many militant workers and revolutionaries doubt this. Their skepticism seems confirmed and apparently justified by the rare news of working class struggles at the international level. The censorship of the media is not a vain word, nor a denunciation of principle, that has no practical consequences. It directly contributes to the feeling of powerlessness and isolation that millions of individual workers can suffer; and, by the way, it reinforces the doubts of the most militant ones and of the communists about the real, practical, in movement, force of the proletariat.

Nevertheless reality is much different from this immediate feeling. It is enough to gather the international news of the last months<sup>3</sup> to state that millions and millions of workers have been participating to varying degrees in mobilizations and struggles on all continents. There is no doubt that these

mobilizations, strikes, demonstrations, Days of action called by the unions, etc. have not succeeded to stop the bourgeoisie from continuing its anti-workers politics, nor even its economic attacks. On the other hand, these mobilizations have really occurred. They are a reality.

It is to this very reality that the promotion of the European radical Left – Podemos in Spain, Front de Gauche in France, Die Linke in Germany... – responds, after the electoral victory of Syriza in Greece. This bourgeois political response to the real combativity of the working class – in particular in Greece and Spain since the 2008 crisis – is the second act of the head-on offensive that the international bourgeoisie<sup>4</sup> has decided to launch against the proletariat at the European and international levels. And this, 15 days after the great demonstration of national unity in Paris. The fact that the ruling class is obliged to lead this offensive, to put forward in the first line the “extreme-left” parties illustrates the reality and potentialities of the working class struggles today.

The European bourgeoisie knows well that the Greek debt will never be paid back. Thus it can afford to let Syriza come to power in Greece – a relatively peripheral and secondary capitalist power – if it succeeds to make credible the other Left “radical” parties at the European level. Inasmuch as Syriza won’t have any other choice than to lead the same anti-working class politics as the previous Greek governments, on the other hand, Syriza and the international mediatization of Podemos enable to paint in glowing colours a Left “radical” political, but not less bourgeois, alternative behind the Capitalist democratic State at the European level just as the great masses of proletarians vote less and less – get away from the democratic bourgeois ground – and struggle more and more – anchor themselves in their class ground.

The confrontations are engaged thus. It is up to the proletariat to raise its fight to the political level against the State and its apparatus, particularly the political (Left and Leftist) and union ones. For this, driven by its most militant minorities, it must take charge of the organization of the extension and unity of its struggles against the unions and leftist maneuvers. For this, the organized revolutionary minorities and, in first line, the communist groups must develop a general political intervention – against the ideological and political maneuvers of the capitalist States – and particularly in the working class struggles so that they assume and materialize the political leadership behind which the whole proletariat will regroup, oppose with all its forces and finally destroy capitalism.

The IGCL, January 28<sup>th</sup> 2015

1 . see *A New Period Opens Up...* page 3.

2 . The massive participation to the Parisian demonstration doesn’t invalidate at all our assessment: the French bourgeoisie has succeeded an immediate political strike by gathering millions of citizens, much sociologically workers, but without adhesion and without any mystified feeling of belonging to the working class contrary to the Popular Fronts of the years 1930 for instance.

3 . see *Worldwide Working Class Struggles*, page 12.

4 . At a lesser level, it is the case of the Québec Solidaire party in Québec province of Canada.

## International Situation

We publish here the communiqué we wrote following the announcement of the attacks, at the very moment French President F. Hollande was calling for national unity and the defense of freedom of speech and democracy. From that very moment and in front of the immediate reaction – just an hour after the Charlie slaughter – it appeared very clearly for us that this massacre was going to be utilized by the bourgeoisie and that it will have international consequences. The hours and days which followed have confirmed our first impression. But at first, above all it mattered to warn the working class – as much as we could – against the trap which was set even when the horror and the barbarity of terrorism could not but provoke emotion and sympathy for the victims of these murders.

After this immediate statement, we produced a text of analysis of the international situation which aims to draw the historical significance and implications of the Parisian attacks and the use that the French State and, with it, the whole international capitalist class, made of them: a new period is opening in which the bourgeoisie is set to confront more directly and massively the proletariat. It looks to impose not only economic sacrifices but, still more, an ideological, political and **physical** defeat so that it can open the path to generalized imperialist war. This text was written January 16<sup>th</sup>. It doesn't take into account Syriza coming to power in Greece January 25<sup>th</sup> and the international significance of the putting forwards of so-called "radical" and anti-economic liberalism Lefts. Syriza's success and the promotion of Podemos in Spain is the second act of this general offensive of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat after the Parisian events. They aim to give credibility to a left democratic political alternative for the workers to make them turn away from their class fight against the crisis and capitalist State, whether this one is ruled by the Right, the Left, indeed extreme-Left and whether it proclaims to be "anti-capitalist" as in Greece.

### **No to Terrorism, No to the Capitalist State!**

Just 4 hours after the slaughter of several famous journalists, the murderous attack against the satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* is already heralded as the "**French September 11<sup>th</sup>**". Calls are growing for national unity, to "unite" behind the democratic state to defend the Republic. France's President, F. Hollande, was immediately at the scene calling for national unity in face of « an attack (...) committed against a newspaper – that is against freedom of expression – against journalists (...) against the spirit of the Republic ». "Democracy" has declared war on barbarism: « we need a national fight against Islamism » said a distinguished Left journalist (Serge Moati). The slogan is launched: "**Defend democracy and the Republic against islamo-fascism**". In mere hours after the attack, the Socialist Party is already calling for "**a Republicans' March**" aimed at leading the population to participate en masse. All the world leaders, Obama, Cameron, Merkel, Putin, etc. denounce the attack and Islamic terrorism. The war against terrorism, declared at the time of the Ottawa (Canada), New York and Sydney attacks these last months, is about to play out again with the population called upon to back their democratic state against the terrorist and totalitarian danger. The anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim propaganda campaigns will intensify just as street demonstrations and "counter-demonstrations" on this question are being advanced in Germany. It is a genuine warlike climate that the bourgeoisies of all countries, particularly North America and Europe, are trying to impose. And undoubtedly for us at this hour this last attack marks a step in setting up a great ideological and political offensive at the international level against the working class in order to impose an atmosphere and logic in defense of the state, national unity and preparation for war.

Clearly we denounce these barbarous acts and the use of terrorism. It is not a weapon of the working class. And above all, present terrorism is always, directly or indirectly, manipulated and provoked by the states as a measure – and moment – of imperialist war and, at the same time, against the working class through generalized terror and the means of repression for which these bloody actions provide the justification; and above all through the ideological and political spin designed to draw in whole populations behind their state and bourgeoisie in the name of national unity and the defense of the 'democratic' state.

For the working class, the 'option' of "democracy against Islamo-fascism" is a trap. Islamic terrorism is produced by democratic states and exacerbated imperialist rivalries – "Human Rights Watch" clearly revealed how the FBI recruited and used unbalanced Muslims (as well as others) to commit "lone-wolf" attacks. It is not Islamism confronting the working class but the capitalist states of which the majority, above all the main ones, are democratic. These terrorist provocations and the anti-terrorist and anti-Islamic campaigns are fully part of state policies used against the working class.

The further that capitalism falls into economic crisis, imperialist rivalries and war, the more that terrorism will develop and hit innocent people. Only the working class can drive back war and terrorist threats by developing its struggles in defense of its living and working conditions. Only through the destruction of capitalism can it pose a solution to this march to war that the bourgeoisie everywhere attempts to impose on mind and body.

The proletariat can't fall into this bourgeois state trap - to line up 'either with it or against terrorists'. This would play into the hands of its archenemy, which it now must fight more than ever.

**No to Terrorism, no to National and 'Democratic' State! Both lead to generalized imperialist war.**

**Yes to working class struggle against capitalism, its misery, its terror, and its wars!**

International Group of the Communist Left, January 7<sup>th</sup> 2015.

## **A New Period Opens: The Bourgeoisie Goes on Massive Offensive Against the World Proletariat which Resists**

What significance and what implications can be drawn from the bloody terrorist attacks of January 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 in Paris and the organisation of massive demonstrations for national unity, the defense of free expression and democracy which followed in all French cities and others cities and capitals worldwide? No doubt that their magnitude largely exceeds the French national size. The immediate mobilization – the very day! – of the capitalist world's main leaders (40 altogether!), the French Hollande of course, but also the British Cameron who was the first to say he will participate from this Wednesday January 7<sup>th</sup>, the German Merkel, the Italian Renzi, the Spanish Rajoy – just to mention the main Europeans –, from African and Asian countries up to the “sworn enemies” of today, the Israeli Netanyahu and the Palestinian Abbas, calling millions of people to demonstrate behind them in the streets of Paris, expresses so clearly the international unity of the main bourgeoisies of the capitalist world on this occasion – the unique sour note being Obama's absence. The bourgeoisies only unite to confront the proletariat. That is to say that the event is not insignificant; it marks an important moment and step; there will “a pre and a post”. This means that the main impact of these days of killing frenzy, of radiant nationalism and overwhelming media campaigns are primarily directed towards the civilian populations; i.e. mainly to workers, salaried, employed, unemployed, who produce most of the social wealth. And it happens at the very moment that capitalism is in deeper and deeper crisis and democratic states prepare to attack living and working conditions already strongly damaged during the last decades, and more particularly since the open economic crisis in 2008.

For the international proletariat, for the working classes of all countries, in particular from the central countries of the capitalist world, the Paris slaughters and the response of the greater imperialist powers and their states open up a new phase in the permanent struggle between capital and labour, between bourgeoisie and international proletariat.

### **The Capitalist Crisis Imposes its Imperatives, its Logic and its Bloody and Barbarous Consequences such as War and Terrorism**

Since 2008 and the bursting of the so-called “subprime” financial crisis, the economic dead-end of capitalism is striking. Since, it has not stopped confirming itself and worsening. It has the consequence of redoubling the economic attacks against the working class everywhere in the world and a considerable sharpening of imperialist rivalries and, above all, wars. The infernal mechanics of capitalism in crisis inescapably drive it, because the exacerbated economic competition which concentrates at the level of each national capital, to imperialist rivalries and, above all, into a process and a logic towards

generalized imperialist war opposing directly the great powers.

*« 2013: as the deadline approaches, the historical alternative increasingly materializes for billions of human beings and the social classes involved. As the working class also bears the burden of preparation for generalized war, its resistance against the effects of the economic crisis simultaneously tends to oppose the logic of war. And thus the course of class struggle is in massive confrontation with this. These clashes will be as decisive for the exploited class, and at the same time the revolutionary class, because depending on whether it will come out of it defeated or not, the dynamics of the class struggle of the new relation of forces will turn towards one or the other term of the historical alternative. The working class holds the keys to this historical dilemma » (Theses on the International Situation adopted at the Constitution Conference of the IGCL, *Revolution or War* #1).*

From a “more or less distant” historical perspective, the alternative which presents itself to humanity, **Proletarian Revolution or generalized Imperialist War**, becomes today more present, more concrete, more “material” – as a more insistent “obligation” – which orients, dictates, imposes more and more directly the actions and decisions of the two main social classes of capitalist society. The utilization of terrorism which has become systematic by the bourgeoisie is one of its manifestations.

### **Terrorism more than ever at the Service of the Bourgeoisie**

We won't come back here to the history of the Islamic terrorist groups whose origin is always, directly or indirectly, linked to the imperialist rivalries, to the states of the main capitalist world powers – United States in the lead – up to smaller powers but not less imperialist as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Pakistan, etc. For anyone who looks a minimum into the question, the secret service's hand, particularly western ones and especially the American CIA, appears in the setting up, the financing and the manipulation (more or less directly) of Al Qaida and IS (on this point in particular, the reader can refer to the ICT comrades' article *The Charlie Hebdo Massacre*). Directly or indirectly, terrorism is the weapon of the capitalist and imperialist democratic states. It has become a tool, an arm, of the imperialist conflicts in Asia, in the Middle East and Africa which daily strikes and terrorizes even more savagely – if so we can say – the local populations – and much less the armies of the great imperialist powers which are engaged there.

One more time, we reaffirm: “Islamic” or not, terrorism has never been a weapon of the working class and has always been utilized against it by the bourgeoisie. Today,

terrorism, especially the Islamist variety, is a means and a moment of the imperialist rivalries and wars and, very often as in the Paris attacks – but also the ones of Ottawa, Sydney and New York these last months, of Belgium and France of these last years –, it is also returned and directed against the working class to terrorize it, to divide it by sowing the poison of racism – particularly anti-Muslim – amongst its most backward fractions and, for its other components, to mystify them, to lead them to regroup behind the “democratic anti-racist” bourgeois state. All the “lone wolves” individuals from North America and “European young islamists” were known, on files, had even been previously jailed, and under surveillance by police and intelligence services. It is really difficult not to see that the special forces had incited, organized, manipulated, or at least “allowed” to one degree or another, these individuals to take their murderous and barbarous logic to its conclusion. Is this not precisely what the Human Rights Watch NGO denounces in one report?

*« Many prosecutions have properly targeted individuals engaged in planning or financing terror attacks, the groups found. **But many others have targeted people who do not appear to have been involved in terrorist plotting or financing at the time the government began to investigate them. (...) In some cases the FBI may have created terrorists out of law-abiding individuals by suggesting the idea of taking terrorist action or encouraging the target to act. Multiple studies have found that nearly 50 percent of the federal counter terrorism convictions since September 11, 2001, resulted from informant-based cases. Almost 30 percent were sting operations in which the informant played an active role in the underlying plot. In the case of the “Newburgh Four,” for example, who were accused of planning to blow up synagogues and attack a US military base, a judge said the government “came up with the crime, provided the means, and removed all relevant obstacles,” and had, in the process, made a terrorist out of a man “whose buffoonery is positively Shakespearean in scope.” The FBI often targeted particularly vulnerable people, including those with intellectual and mental disabilities and the indigent. The government, often acting through informants, then actively developed the plot, persuading and sometimes pressuring the targets to participate, and provided the resources to carry it out »** (July 21<sup>st</sup> 2014 US: Terrorism Prosecutions Often An Illusion, Investigations, Trials of American Muslims Rife with Abuse by Human Rights Watch, our emphasis).*

There is a line of continuity between the terrorist attacks in North America, Australia and Europe. They all have the same characteristics, the very ones the Human Rights Watch describes; the same kind of individual already known by police and the same procedures; and they give rise to the same internal ideological themes driving to the division of the population between Muslims and non-Muslims, nationals and immigrants; and to lead the workers to a false choice between racism and anti-racism

which extends the one between “Islamic” terrorism and anti-terrorism while racism and terrorism can’t disappear as long as capitalism is not destroyed.

We know – because the proletariat’s revolutionary theory, that is Marxism, taught us – that the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production have the force of law and impose themselves on the bourgeoisie and its politics. After one century of historical decline and incredible development of the economic and imperialist contradictions and state totalitarianism, we know that terrorism has become one the main manifestations of imperialist rivalries and is utilized by **all** states. How much the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has already taught us! We also know that the bourgeoisie won’t hesitate a second, when the danger is major for it and its system, to use it in a direct and bloody way against the working class, particularly in a revolutionary period. Let’s remember Rosa Luxemburg’s assassination in 1919 in Germany and with her the thousands and thousands of revolutionary workers!

### **Terrorism Utilized for Reinforcing the Repression Arsenal against the Working Class**

But terrorism, today so-called “Islamist” terrorism, serves also as a pretext for the reinforcement of the repression apparatus of the totalitarian state. Let’s leave aside here the incredible pressure the French government and the state apparatus (which has financed the print run of the newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* up to 7 million copies!), profusely relayed by the media, have exerted to impose the badge and slogan “Je suis Charlie”. Anyone who refuses to affirm “I am Charlie”, indeed refuses to wear the badge, whatever is the reason, is accused at once, made to feel guilty, even punished at school or college for the youths, in the workplaces for the salaried for national indignity and collusion with terrorism! Stupid teenagers are condemned for many months to jail for having uttered imbecilities and racist or terrorist insults. Others, not much older, still bigger idiots, at the same level of the “Right” racists, are fired for misconduct.

The important point is not there. As the American September 11<sup>th</sup> had been the occasion for setting up the *Patriot Act* (legitimizing amongst other things the Guantanamo imprisonments), the “French September 11<sup>th</sup>” sees bourgeois politicians calling for the same measures, for the adoption of a French *Patriot Act*, while others outbid: one of Sarkozy’s former Ministers calls for sending the army to the... “Muslim” suburbs. The European legislation is going to be changed once more so that the European police can survey even more the Internet and the “private” exchanges (mails, Skype, social networks, etc.). As the TV consultants, former policemen or secret agents acknowledge it themselves, this won’t prevent other terrorist attacks. On the other hand, we know it, this will reinforce the surveillance and the control of all the sectors of society and particularly the working class and the anti-capitalist political “opponents”.

Besides the discourses calling for national unity before the minute of silence on the workplaces after the *Charlie* murders, the surveillance and the repression in the companies, in the workplaces is going to be strengthened:

« *The magazine Der Spiegel has reported that the Daimler corporation has been comparing the names, addresses and birth dates of all its 280,000 employees worldwide with data on European Union (EU) and United States terrorist lists in order to contribute to “the fight against terrorism”. Daimler’s works council [i.e. the unions] explicitly supports this arrangement (...) Employees who show up on one of the terrorist lists are to be “released”, that is, fired (...). These lists are created by the secret service agencies. They decide who is a “terror suspect”, despite the fact that so many “suspects” can end up on such lists simply because of a similarity of names* » Germany: Daimler screening workers for terrorist links, [www.wsws.org](http://www.wsws.org), D. Henning, January 13<sup>th</sup> 2015).

Thus, it is a whole repressive apparatus which is set up whose main target is not so much the struggle against terrorism but to prepare the state apparatus to repress the working class and its revolutionary political minorities.

### **The Racist and Democratic Anti-Racist Demonstrations against the Working Class Unity**

The slaughters at *Charlie Hebdo* and at the Jewish market in Paris which extend the series of terrorist murders and attacks in Canada, United States, Australia these last months, come to fuel even more, to reinforce and provoke racist, anti-Muslim, feelings in the populations (including amongst the more backward strata of the proletariat) and, in return, anti-racist street counter-demonstrations on a democratic and state terrain. This dynamic is particularly evident in Germany where, for some months now, there have been weekly demonstrations in Dresden called by the organization PEGIDA to which have responded street counter-demonstrations called by... Merkel herself. It is in all Europe, at different levels according to the national situations, that the bourgeoisie uses and exacerbates both the racist, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant feelings and pushes on the other side so that the populations, the “citizens”, take to the streets in the name of anti-racism and democracy. Numerous racist and anti-immigrant demonstrations have occurred these last months in Italy and Greece. PEGIDA itself spreads to other countries: « *besides Spain, Pegida has rising or announced ramifications in Austria, in Sweden and Switzerland* » (*Libération*, French newspaper, January 14<sup>th</sup> 2015, translated by us). And no doubt that the anti-racist counter-demonstrations on the bourgeois terrain will go hand in hand with this “international extension” of PEGIDA.

The same phenomenon has arisen in the United States even though it was under a slightly different pretext which doesn't change the nature of the ideological and political offensive: the murder of a young black man in the small town of Ferguson in Missouri, the repeated murders of

young black men, even including children, and the absence of legal charges against the policemen who had killed them, couldn't but have a deliberately provocative character and push to demonstrations. Without going back to details in the course of the events, demonstrations, riots and lootings, increased repression, and media's orchestration, it is clear that the American state has played with the two moments, murders and judicial decision on one part, and street demonstrations on the other, to create a tense climate opposing blacks and whites – « *Two days later [October 6<sup>th</sup>], protesters at the Cardinals-Dodgers Major League Baseball playoff game were greeted by boos and demands that they “get a job” or “go back to Africa.”* » according to *The New Yorker*, October 15<sup>th</sup> 2014 – and aiming at mobilizing for a democratic police around the state. At the time of writing, a week after the Paris assassinations, Fox News TV watched by millions of Americans is violently boosting these racist campaigns. They present cities such as Birmingham in Great Britain as exclusively Muslim, and the Arab neighborhoods in Paris as “no-go zones” where police and “Europeans” – understand “whites” – can't go and where all women are veiled while men wear tee-shirts with Bin Laden's image. Besides maintaining anti-European feelings (and even more anti-American ones in Europe for their ridiculousness and the delirious extravagance as well as their mediatization) to nationalist and imperialist ends, these televised campaign fully participate in the spreading of racism and anti-Arab racist feelings.

A very well known journalist, Laurence Haim, permanent reporter in United States for one of the main French TV channels and despite a great professional experience, has not understood why she was urged to go to Ferguson and why later she has been criticized for not having gone. What she says is highly revealing both of the reality of the events in Ferguson and of their staging by the bourgeois media, but also of the latter's manipulative nature:

« *It is a media hysteria I have rarely known. I refuse to go. And Monday night, as announced, it bursts. CNN makes a breaking on their reporter who took a stone in her head. The breaking lasts 2 hours looped: “our reporter has received a stone in the head”. Then, I call reliable American producers to ask them:*

- “*is this really war in Ferguson?*” and they answer me: “*Listen, it is really complicated, there are 500 cameras, 3 buildings burning, but as they are built in paper-maché, that makes big flames and we all are on live broadcast*”.

*I ask them, “but how many people are in the street, how many that demonstrate against racism?”*

- “*Well, it is a little complicated because there is the family who was in front of the court saying they're going to break everything*” »

(*L'important* : <http://limportant.fr/tribune/45>, translated by us from French)

We thus witness an international offensive, following the terrorist attacks, against the working class aiming at the same time to divide it, trap it in false alternatives and to

lead it to support the state and capitalist democracy.

### **An Offensive of the Bourgeoisie against the Proletariat's Resistance to the Logic of its System**

The orchestration of the October American demonstrations against racist police repression has been set up following the massive and numerous street protests in Mexico against the assassinations and the disappearances of tens of young students in September-October in Ayotzinapa in the Guerrero state. The American protests have been presented as the continuity of the Mexican movement. It is not the case. The former have been provoked and developed on another class terrain than the demonstrations in Mexico. They represent a bourgeois class response and opposition by focusing on the racial and anti-racist terrain, on the division black-white and on the democratization of American police; i.e. in the framework of and support of the state. The huge and numerous demonstrations in Mexico come within the scope of another dynamic and on another terrain: the more they developed and spread to the country, the more they denounced the state as a whole: its government, its regional state governors and local *caciques*, the party in power (PRI) but also the other parties such as the Left one (PRD), the police, the Army and Justice. This means that the dynamic of the movement initiated by emotion, anger and indignation, tended to set itself against the bourgeois state and to take on an eminently proletarian class nature. Nothing such in the small (as the French journalist revealed) demonstrations in Ferguson which quickly turned into riot and simple looting and still less in the demonstrations which took place in the other American cities which, up to our knowledge, were all set within the ground of bourgeois democracy.

The movement in Mexico is situated within the dynamic of the working class struggles of the last months (see *Workers Struggle throughout the World* in this issue, p. 12) and years. It is a general push, despite the media's attempts to censor and silence it, which has given the energy to these "Mexican" reactions so that they are on a clear anti-capitalist terrain.

Since 2008, there have been a vast number of worker's mobilizations and demonstrations against the effects of the crisis on all continents. The fact most of them have been silenced by the TV and newspapers and have been controlled and managed by the states, particularly by the unions, doesn't change the fact that this slow dynamic of militancy and resistance to capitalist logic confirms itself and continues to develop. On the contrary, the censorship of the struggles and the preventive setting up of great union national "Days of Action" and street demonstrations – especially in western Europe – shows well that the worker's resistance, as insufficient it may be, is a reality and an obstacle for the bourgeoisie. Actually, not only is it constrained to increase labor exploitation because of the crisis but also because of the necessity of military and armament expenditures that the growing imperialist rivalries require. But above all, the perspective of

generalized imperialist war contained in the present situation of capitalism calls for more and more important and increased economic sacrifices and an "active" support of the great masses of the international proletariat to the main bourgeois ideological mystifications. This support aims that the revolutionary class accepts, besides the sacrifices – including physical ones –, to regroup behind the national state and the bourgeoisie – often in the name of the "defense of democracy against barbarism" as it had been the case in 1914 and 1939. The persistence of working class struggles for the defense of its class interests on all continents and almost all countries – whatever their force – represents a hindrance to the march towards generalized war in which capitalism must engage. The historical experience, in particular from the 1930s, shows us that, to go into a generalized war, capital must confront the proletariat and inflict on it an "historical" defeat; that is not only at the economic, ideological and political levels but also a minimum of bloody physical defeats as in Germany, Russia and Spain in the years of the 1920s and 1930; and so to extinguish any dynamic of significant workers' resistance (even though it never fully disappears, including in the darkest period as, for instance, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War). This is why we talked up to now of an "historical course" or dynamic, towards massive confrontations between the main antagonistic classes of capitalism.

The Paris terrorist attacks and the events that followed, i.e. the reaction of the states, the organization of the Parisian demonstration but also the development of racist and anti-racist demonstrations show that these massive confrontations between bourgeoisie and proletariat are beginning. They show that the bourgeoisie, European at the head, has taken the initiative of engaging this showdown against the international proletariat, to provoke these massive confrontations. It is now constrained to do so by the urgency that the worsening of the economic crisis imposes and by the exacerbation of the imperialist rivalries which ensue from it. The fact that the main bourgeoisies, the main imperialist powers, display themselves united – up to the Paris boulevards! – on this occasion clearly indicates the anti-proletarian dimension of these Parisian days: the rival imperialisms silence and leave in second place their antagonisms only to confront the working class. It is one of the lessons that the Paris Commune delivered and which has been much confirmed during the proletarian revolutionary wave from 1917 to 1923 in Russia as well as in Germany.

### **The Historical Weakness of the Bourgeoisie in Front of the Massive Class Confrontations**

Does this mean the working class defeat is inescapable at the end of the period which is opening up and that the bourgeoisie is going to succeed to force the working class to completely submit and to lead it behind the states, to make it abandon its class ground and to inflict on it a bloody defeat? No, far from it. Contrary to what many can

believe at first sight, by staying either on the surface of things or remaining prisoners of a mechanical, indeed static, vision, the bourgeoisie doesn't enter in this phase in a favorable situation **at the historical level; objectively** if one prefers. And the immediate success in the utilization of the Paris murders and the January 11<sup>th</sup> march doesn't put into question this assessment. At first, we just are at the very beginning of this phase and January 2015 doesn't constitute but the first episode, the first initiative, of these confrontations. Already, and despite the national and international unity displayed, signs of contradictions within the ruling class have arisen: the inability of the French bourgeoisie to integrate the extreme-right *Front National* (30% of the votes according to the present polls) in the demonstration in Paris; Obama's absence at this same demo. Far from interrupting or losing intensity, January sees immediately reappear opposed interests within the ruling class; thus we see a revival and an accentuation of wars and military interventions opposing the great powers: Ukraine, Mali, Libya, Iraq, Syria, etc. On the other side of the class barricade, the weeks and months to come are going to confirm that the working class continues to struggle against the different economic attacks which are already announced; and so that it turns its back on "national unity". In this sense, if the Paris demonstration has been an immediate success by managing to make millions of people march behind 40 state leaders (unheard of since 1945), and if the number of proletarians may have participated as individuals, there was no participation as working class but as "French citizen" despite the so-called "worker's" unions call to participate. If the ruling class displays that it is going to contest the working class demonstrations against the crisis and against capitalism with its own mobilizations on a bourgeois terrain, it does not yet have the means to make the working class as such demonstrate behind it, with a mystified and derailed feeling of class belonging, as it could have done it in the 1930s – in great part thanks to the mass Stalinist parties.

More generally, beyond the defense of democracy and nation adapted under diverse variants according to the moments and places, the bourgeois ideologues and propagandists are going to be less and less capable to effectively argue that the immediate sacrifices are necessary for future prosperity and peace... at the moment the crisis lasts for 40 years without a break and it dramatically speeds up today; at this moment wars are multiplying and spreading on all continents. It is the yearning for peace after the slaughter in the trenches and the immediate "possibilities" of implementing it on which the ruling classes played with success to derail important parts of the proletariat from revolutionary action from 1919 onwards in Germany and western Europe. It is the – relative – reduction of unemployment and thus the prospect of economic revival, of capitalist prosperity, which also enabled the bourgeoisie – with the New Deal and the Popular Front in the USA and France, the full employment under Nazism in Germany, all preparing the

generalized imperialist war by the increasing militarist production – to calm the class reactions (massive strikes of May-June 1936 in Belgium and France, massive demonstrations and riots of unemployed in the United States) and to reduce them by maintaining and even increasing their control by the Socialist parties and above all by the Stalinist CP. This means that, in the period which begins, the capitalist ruling class won't be able to play on the perspective of peace nor on prosperity to mask capitalism's historical bankruptcy.

Today, capitalist crisis and imperialist war are presenting at the same time and openly appear to nourish one another. This weakens the influence of capitalist ideology and limits its immediate capacity to durably drag the whole proletariat behind the capitalist state and the ruling class. The fact that the ruling class deliberately takes the initiative of massive confrontations against the proletariat is not, ultimately, the expression of its strength but of its historical weakness or, if one prefers, of its historical difficulties and contradictions.

### **The International Proletariat Must Go Further against Capitalism**

In this historical confrontation, and contrary to the appearance of a static or photographic vision which the slowness and the limitations of the working class struggles to date could also feed, the historical situation which sees crisis and war presenting at the same time **historically, objectively**, plays in favor of the proletariat. Actually, to date, even though its immediate struggles don't question capitalism and its misery and logic of death, the working class when it mobilizes, stays on anti-capitalist class terrain against the bourgeois state. **This is fundamental.** It is precisely what hinders the march of the bourgeoisie towards war and what it has now to eliminate urgently. Of course, it is the case in western Europe as historical center of capitalism. But it is also the case in countries where the working class tradition and experience is lesser.

This dynamic towards class confrontation is what the proletarian demonstrations in Brazil during the soccer World Cup and the ones in Mexico against the massacres committed by the party in power and the state, to give two examples, express. Let us make no mistake, the direct or indirect orchestration of the racist and anti-racist street demonstrations in Germany and Europe, the demonstrations around the racist murders of Ferguson in the United States, and of course the manifestations which had been held from the night of January 7<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>, attempt precisely to respond in an offensive and aggressive manner on a bourgeois class terrain to these particular expressions of working class resistance.

Obviously, when we affirm that the **historical** situation is in favor of the proletariat, this doesn't mean that the path to revolution is open and inescapable. This means that it **can** "win" the massive confrontations which begin and which the international bourgeoisie took the initiative to start. To

“win” this phase means that the revolutionary class will succeed to block the bourgeoisie and its projects of misery and generalized war. Thus it will set up the conditions for the opening of a revolutionary period. But for this, still it has to overcome the weaknesses it continues to express. Though, when the proletariat is struggling, it maintains itself on its class ground, it is also true that to date it hasn't succeeded in forcing a withdrawal of the economic attacks that it suffers (nor the setting up of anti-working class measures for repression in the streets as well as in the workplaces). This weakness doesn't reside in a lack of willingness to struggle and resist but essentially in its incapacity to raise its fight to the political level; that is to say to assume the political confrontation for the direction of its struggles against the forces, mainly union and Left political forces, which hinder and sabotage them; today, more concretely, for the organisation of the extension of its mobilizations and their unity against the forces which oppose it. In this sense, and to give an example, the break-up of the wildcat strikes in Belgium, October 2014, and the violent clashes with the police by the Antwerpen dockers, the Wallonia metal workers, and other workers, at the working class demonstration in Brussels of November 6<sup>th</sup>, show the path to follow. Only partly, because these “spontaneous” expressions have not yet been followed – according to our knowledge – by a conscious and determined effort to take charge of this fight whether by initiatives of organisation and regroupment, or extension and development of the strike that the union Days of Action planned in advance – several for November to December 15<sup>th</sup> – aimed to stifle and prevent, which they have succeeded in doing so far.

Thus, it is at the political, that is “conscious”, level where lies the main weakness of the proletariat today. It affects the great masses of the working class but also, and more particularly, its most militant and conscious sectors and minorities. Last example of this weakness: the railway workers, the dockers, metal workers, the most determined of the wildcat strikes and demonstrations in Belgium didn't succeed – once more according to our information – to launch slogans of extensions and unity, for instance in the Brussels demonstrations, and to regroup through committees or assemblies for that goal or to keep contacts between them and to prepare the strikes of tomorrow.

Nevertheless, other examples of working class struggles show that the proletariat makes significant steps forwards these last months at the level of its consciousness: the struggles which clearly fought against the state and its repression apparatus in Mexico as well as the earlier ones which strongly opposed the Left government in Brazil.

But this political or “consciousness” weakness expresses itself even more at the level of the revolutionaries and communist minorities. There too, in this particular and essential dimension of the class struggle, there is a stake and a parallel battle, if so we can say, to the one the bourgeoisie has decided today to deliver to the exploited and revolutionary class as a whole.

### **The New Period is Going to Accelerate the Recomposition of the Revolutionary Camp**

A photographic or static vision can only offer an image of dispersion and political hesitation of the revolutionary minorities which make them mostly inaudible and ineffective. The observation is correct in itself for the revolutionary milieu as for the Proletarian Camp, i.e. at least for the political groups and organizations which claim the international Communist Left. Nevertheless, a dynamic vision enables us to place this weakness at its real level: the general offensive of the bourgeoisie can't but precipitate a recomposition of the revolutionary and communist minorities which has already begun under the blows of the crisis and imperialist rivalries.

It is not by chance that the international revolutionary milieu sees circles and groups surging, some breaking with leftism, other without experience, in different countries and in all continents – we can't draw up the list here – and that the “old” Proletarian Camp linked to the Communist Left is already openly in a process of recomposition. The acceleration of the obvious decomposition of the ICC which is in a state of permanent internal crisis since 2001 – as it itself acknowledges and writes – is its most striking and negative manifestation. One can add to this the disappearance or the dispersion of groups from the councilist tendency such as *Internationalist Perspectives* enacting thereby their definitive powerlessness faced with the battle between the classes which is opening. But the bearing and the assertiveness of the ICT on its class positions despite its manifest hesitations to assume with determination and dynamism its central place within this camp, the slow but real reaffirmation of “Bordigist” groups and, we have this pretentiousness, the constitution of our group constitute signs, certainly amongst others, of the strength of the proletariat. New lines of regroupment, of debates and of fracture have already begun to form within the revolutionary milieu and even within the Proletarian Camp; and they can't but develop even more violently that the class struggle now takes a sharper and more bitter dimension. Already, the impact of the attacks in Paris and their historical significance provoke reflection and debate which interpellate directly the revolutionary and political groups and organizations on their own statement and on their understanding of the event. No doubt that the period which is opening and the outburst of the bourgeois offensive, including its new intensity and the dramatization of the events of the class struggle, will accelerate this recomposition and redefinition of the revolutionary milieu and Proletarian Camp.

The stake of this specific battle? To ensure that this phase of massive confrontations between the classes opens, on the basis of the proletariat's fightback, at least the material conditions, that is theoretical, political and organizational, for the constitution of the indispensable communist party of tomorrow as the highest expression of class consciousness and thus as organ of political leadership of the proletariat.

The new period which is opening won't simply give rise to increased capitalist attacks against the working class which will just respond, mechanically, to the higher demanding imperatives of capitalist crisis and imperialist war. The Paris attacks and the ideological and political utilization that has been made of them, means the ruling class is going to lead a much more aggressive and head-on politics against the proletariat through feeding and provoking growing extreme tensions, such as terrorist attacks, violent racist demonstrations, the exacerbation of racist, nationalist, "security" confrontations through the maximum dramatization of all these expressions of division and opposition which are not of a class nature. For the international proletariat, the danger and the trap is to get impressed and terrorized by all the barbarous and bloody acts that the bourgeoisie is going to utilize, to give up its resistance and opposition to capitalism and to its state and regroup behind it under such or such nationalist and democratic banner or slogan.

There are therefore, in the aftermath of the bloody events of Paris, faced with a declaration of war by the international bourgeoisie, the stakes for the international proletariat as a whole, for the most militant fractions of workers, and for the revolutionary and communist minorities in particular.

No to terrorism, no to the anti-terrorist front! No to anti-Muslim or anti-immigrant racism, no to the anti-racist front! No to national unity! No to the defense of the democratic, or not, capitalist state! No to the defense of imperialism of every country!

Already the workers must regroup around the following general slogans:

Let's resist the capitalist crisis and calls for sacrifices: **Yes to working class struggle against Capitalism and its attacks! Let's defend our working class demands, wages, work, working conditions!**

Our interests as salaried or unemployed, as exploited, are the same everywhere regardless of our origins and skin color: **Immigrants and non-immigrants, Muslims and non-Muslims, blacks and whites, we all are exploited!**

Let's spread and unify our struggles to all categories, to all sectors and beyond all frontiers! Let's regroup and fight back against every attack of capital!

Capitalism in crisis wants to drive us to misery and death in a generalized imperialist war: let's destroy capitalism! That quickly comes genuine Communism (which is the opposite of stalinism), a society without exploitation, without classes, without misery and war!

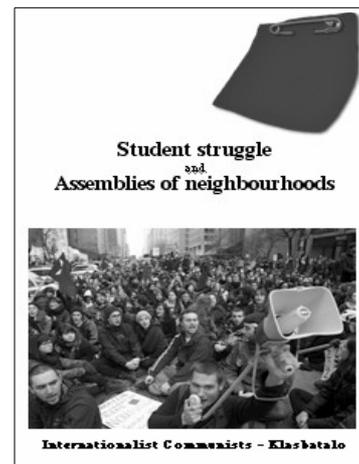
Jonas/ RL, January 16<sup>th</sup> 2015.

## **Student Struggle and Assemblies of Neighbourhoods in Québec (2012)**

« Throughout our involvement in the student struggle, we've had as the leitmotif that students alone, facing the government, could not aspire to impart any transformation on society. Thus, it was necessary for them to broaden their struggle to other sectors of society, especially workers, the only truly revolutionary social class... »

« In summary, the "social strike" failed mainly because Labour was not put on strike. And if workers didn't go on strike, it is mostly through the consciously calculated inertia of large unions. »

**(Internationalist Communists – Klasbatalo)**



## **Critical Comments about the Text on the International Situation: « A New Period opens... »**

We publish here the contribution of a comrade of the IGCL who expresses critical comments on the statement of the previous text : A New Period Opens... The comrade's main reservation is that it is premature to assert that the French and international bourgeoisie's response to the Paris attacks shows the opening of a new period – or phase - in the dynamic of the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in which the relation of forces favours the proletariat. We present publicly this internal debate to promote political reflection and confrontation. We call on all of our readers and communist groups to take part in this debate.

Do the Paris attacks and their aftermath signal the opening of a new historic period marked by an increase in the confrontation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie?

Ideological mystification is a permanent feature of capitalist society. The ruling class is compelled to regularly reaffirm the notions of national and racial identity as well as to elevate to the level of eternal principle the apparent freedom that exists in the domain of exchange. It is no surprise therefore that an event, especially one as shocking as a massacre, would be exploited to reaffirm nationalist and democratist ideology. This is important in times of crisis as the bourgeoisie is forced by the logic of capitalist competition to intensify exploitation and enact a program of austerity. Faced with attacks on their living standards, the illusions in liberal democracy and capitalist prosperity amongst proletarians start to wear thin. However, as the experience of the past shows the simple fact of resistance to economic attacks, even when they are militant and outside of the framework of trade unions, is no guarantee of a favourable outcome from the point of view of the working class. An example of this point is the wave of strikes and demonstrations across Europe in the late 1960s and 70s, which were either crushed outright – the case in Poland and Czechoslovakia – or demobilized because of an insufficient maturation of political consciousness within the class whose struggle remained on an economic level. The latter was the case with the miners in the UK under the Thatcher government. Another aspect to consider is the allure of false alternatives, in particular those put forward by the "radical" left. From the increase in combativity amongst proletarians in the 1970s in economic struggles, the ICC at the time inferred and theorised that the 80s were "the years of truth" that would lead either to world revolution or world war. The ICC at the time underestimated the bourgeoisie's ability to forestall and manage the crisis.

The principle political economic difference between the situation of 30-40 years ago and that of today is the level of financialization of the global economy, itself a response to the capitalist crisis and the combativity of the working class in its economic struggles. The bourgeoisie now has one fewer card to play. They can't stall for time by relying on speculative investment to

create the illusion of prosperity the same way that they did in the 70s. From that point of view the situation is not as objectively favourable to the bourgeoisie as it was before. On the other hand they are continually developing the physical and legal means of state repression which increasingly become the favoured tool in the capitalist class's response to worker's struggles. We see this with the militarization of the police in North America and the passing of anti-terror legislation worldwide, including in Canada, as well as in the heavy handed approach used by police in Turkey and Brazil against demonstrators. Also, the influence of false alternatives –Podemos, Syriza, Quebec Solidaire, the various refurbished and modernized Stalinist formations around the world – on the development of the class struggle is difficult to forecast and so we should be cautious about declaring the dawning of a new period.

While the mass mobilization of proletarians behind the bourgeoisie on the streets of Paris is indicative of an ideological offensive on the part of the ruling class, the relation of power between classes today is ambiguous. The situation is contradictory. In some places the logic of the nation state prevails and the ruling class succeeds in focusing the anger of the working class onto some external influence, supposedly corrupting the otherwise organic national democratic community. In other places the bourgeoisie is forced to contend with a militant and re-emerging working class.

*« If the Paris demonstration has been an immediate success by managing to make millions of people march behind 40 state leaders (unheard of since 1945), and if the number of proletarians may have participated as individuals, there was no participation as working class but as "French citizen" despite the so-called "worker's" unions' call to participate. If the ruling class displays that it is going to contest the working class demonstrations against the crisis and against capitalism with its own mobilizations on a bourgeois terrain, it does not yet have the means to make the working class as such demonstrate behind it, with a mystified and derailed feeling of class belonging, as it could have done it in the 1930s. » (A New Period Opens...)*

Could this not be indicative of a weakness rather than strength of the proletariat relative to the bourgeoisie?

The French bourgeoisie did not even have to bring the working class behind it by appealing to a "mystified and derailed feeling of class belonging". It was sufficient to appeal to them as French citizens and to appeal to their desire to protect French republican values. Hence, we are not even at the level of class in itself consciousness.

Furthermore, I think it is dangerous to be overly optimistic about the ability of the working class to resist the bourgeoisie's march to war. The epoch of mass armies is in the past. The competing imperialist interests have spent years stockpiling the most modern means of destruction. The danger of mutiny is not as present as in past wars, the competing sides relying on the most ideologically amenable units of elite soldiers, as opposed to mass armies of conscripts, to carry out their bloody work. In fact, the technology already exists to create autonomous drones that can select and destroy targets independently of human supervision. There is a tendency towards intensification of technology in warfare that is parallel to the change from labour to capital intensive production and that is motivated by the same imperative: that of capitalist competition. On the other hand despite the intensification of technology in warfare, modern warfare still requires infantry. Faced with the prospect of being used as cannon fodder in wars for profit, even the most patriotic and professional military units may contemplate mutiny.

*« More generally, beyond the defence of democracy and nation adapted under diverse variants according to the moments and places, the bourgeois ideologues and propagandists are going to be less and less capable to effectively argue that the immediate sacrifices are necessary for future prosperity and peace... at the moment the crisis lasts for 40 years without a break and it dramatically speeds up today; **at this moment wars are multiplying and spreading on all continents.** » (A new period...)*

Is this not an indication of the relative weakness of the proletariat? That despite the reduced efficacy of the arguments on the necessity of sacrifices, we continue to see wars multiplying and spreading? That despite the growing bankruptcy of the ideological justification for austerity and war, we continue to see more and more austerity and war? The question is how bankrupt do the arguments for austerity and war have to be in the minds of the workers before they begin to effectively resist these on their own terms? For this to happen it is not enough for bourgeois arguments and apologetics for austerity and war to cease to be effective. We also need

an international, centralized, political vanguard to point the way forward for the class at large. This is mentioned in the article on the international situation but it is worth emphasizing.

What would indicate that the balance of forces generally favours the proletariat?

By far the biggest present weakness of the proletariat is the state of its political vanguard which is weakened by sectarianism and the corrupting influence of democratic ideology, including its Internet variant, with all of the social atomization and implications for surveillance and repression that go with it. Whether or not the revolutionaries of today can harness the undeniable militancy of proletarians worldwide and impart on them a political (revolutionary) consciousness – by integrating them as sympathizers to their groups and by gaining influence within the class – will be the decisive factor. This is far from certain given the state of dispersal and amateurism in the ranks of the class vanguard. Though I generally agree with the arguments made in the text on the international situation, I am wary of the wording which suggests there is a new period that is favourable to the proletariat. Our limited nature puts into doubt our ability to present a revolutionary perspective to the working class, which is necessary for the class struggle to go beyond the economic terrain, to confront the bourgeois political forces which intervene in the struggles of the working class in order to sabotage these struggles, and eventually to lead to a revolutionary outcome. This view is not motivated by the pessimism (common amongst leftist academics) about the historic possibility and necessity of the proletariat to act in its own interests. It is motivated by a desire to contribute to a sober assessment of the global relation of forces between classes and to inspire reflection on the weaknesses of the political vanguard of the proletariat so that we may redress these weaknesses.

To conclude, I agree that we are witnessing an ideological offensive from the ruling class but I caution against over-optimism. For the proletariat to truly resist bourgeoisie's march to war, it must act as a class for itself. If it does not it risks falling for the traps set by the bourgeoisie that blame the effects of the crisis on some convenient scapegoat such as the IMF, the ECB, finance capital rather than capital as such, and specifically American or specifically German imperialism rather than imperialism as such.

Stavros, January 30th, 2015.

## Workers Struggles throughout the World

Working class resistance against crisis measures is not only unabated but on the rise. Since the intensification of capitalism's 2008 crisis, the working class is far from capitulating. Back in the '30s, the working class was ideologically subjugated to the bourgeoisie. Millions of proletarians gave life and limb to defend democracy whether in Spain or in the second world war. The working class set its immediate and long term interests aside, with the large majority defending bourgeois interests, first in Spain, then that of the Allies in the Resistance and of Russian state capitalism against fascism during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

Today, it is no longer prepared to sacrifice itself economically and especially not physically to the interests of the bourgeoisie<sup>5</sup>. Our purpose here is to combat censorship and the bourgeois media blackout of workers' struggles and to emphasize above all that the class is increasingly defending itself, particularly in the central countries and in advancing the struggle and consciousness within the ranks of workers. The large majority of these struggles and demonstrations are still tightly controlled by the unions, which keep them within a 'reformist' and 'legal' framework. The unions expose themselves as part of the state apparatus in diverting workers from a truly anti-capitalist struggle. In Belgium, during the railway workers' strike of which we give an account in the communiqué, (in pamphlet form) that we have included below, the unions have lost control and have failed to put down the explosion of strikes: "*If this government does not step back, we risk losing control of our troops*", declared a leader of the Christian union CSS, in the newspaper *Le Soir*. And this isn't the only price of a succession of days of action up to the 15<sup>th</sup> of December that the Belgian bourgeoisie and its unions have succeeded in putting down with this particular period of workers mobilization. The succession of strikes in Germany, Lufthansa and railways in particular, expresses as well the course and significance of workers strikes to come in Europe. Here then is a list, not extensive, of those over the latter part of 2014 which seem indicative of the reality and potentialities (as well as limits and shortcomings) of international proletarian militancy.

**Belgium:** October 20<sup>th</sup>, the Charleroi railway workers went on a wildcat strike. They had to endure the sabotage of the train conductors union, "*syndicat autonome des conducteurs de train (SACT)*". Previously the region's railway workers had already wildcatted. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, more than 120,000 workers demonstrated in Brussels against crisis measures. This demonstration

ended through very violent confrontations between the police and primarily the dockers of Antwerp and the metal workers of Wallonia. Afterwards, a wave of rotating strikes in the provinces of Antwerp, Luxembourg, Hainaut, and Limburg on November 24<sup>th</sup> put forward by the unions to permit them to avert a general strike. On December 15<sup>th</sup>, airport, school, public service, hospital and public transport workers went on strike against pro-austerity measures. The strikers took up their pickets and barricaded main roads of regions both Flemish and francophone, refusing to let the nationalists divide them.

**Germany:** October 20<sup>th</sup> (the day of the Belgian railway workers' strike), Lufthansa airline personnel were again on strike, taking over from the German railway workers' strike of the previous weekend. The fact that these struggles were paralyzing national and international transports forced the bourgeois media to mention them or risk losing credibility entirely.

**Spain:** Hundreds of thousands took to the streets of Madrid, Barcelona, and most of the big cities on November 29<sup>th</sup> to protest the austerity that the bourgeoisie had imposed on them and the misery that's hitting them hard.

**Great Britain:** Mid-October strikes and demonstrations took place in every country under union control, leading up to big demonstrations in London, Glasgow, etc..

**Greece:** Twenty-five thousand, according to police, demonstrated Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup> in Athens against austerity. "*We are not just numbers, we deserve to live under human conditions*", chanted demonstrators at Syntagma Square, in front of the Athens Parliament.

**Ireland:** Demonstration against billing for water use in Dublin. These were the most important demonstrations against austerity, since the beginning of the financial crisis, the country had ever seen. More than 100,000 Irish demonstrated against the government's austerity measures and its project to charge for water.

**Italy:** A million and a half Italians poured into the streets of more than 50 cities on December 12<sup>th</sup> for a general strike against the projected 2015 budget and labour market reform. In Turin and in Milan, these demonstrations ended in violent confrontations with police.

**Portugal:** Tens of thousands of civil servants demonstrated October 31<sup>st</sup> on the streets of Lisbon to protest salary cuts and increased working hours, after parliament's adoption of the draft budget for 2015.

**Poland:** in mid-January, after a week of strikes and blockades of the railways, the coal miners forced the

5 . Some anarchist groups have attempted to drag the proletariat behind them in defense of the Kurdish bourgeoisie in Kobane in Syria

government and its chief Eva Kopacz, the “Polish Margaret Thatcher”, to give up. The strike had spread to 14 mines and aimed at opposing the closure of 4 of them.

**Ukraine:** Demonstration in Kiev against austerity measures. Several thousand workers, pensioners and students demonstrated on December 23<sup>rd</sup> in front of Rada (parliament) in Kiev to denounce the government’s violent austerity plan. This plan allowed for the layoffs of 10% of public sector workers, the closing of 400 schools, cuts to student bursaries, a tripling of gas prices, a hike in university registration fees, etc. This plan’s objective is to repay Ukraine’s debt to the IMF.

**Bosnia:** “*Tuzla, Bosnia, today, December 1, 2014: The gathering of workers from several factories and ...a strong police presence. In the words of a worker confronted by cops who had come in force to protect the local government building: “You will not stop me! I am ready to die here today, so that my child will have something to eat tomorrow.”*

**Canada:** September 20<sup>th</sup> in Montreal close to 50,000 demonstrators came out against attacks to the municipal employees’ retirement system. On October 31<sup>st</sup>, around 30,000 demonstrators did likewise against cuts to public services, and on November 29<sup>th</sup> nearly 100,000 expressed their discontent against austerity in general.

**Mexico:** During the last few months, dozens of demonstrations comprising hundreds of thousands of participants in several cities around the country massively impeded the economy to denounce the mafia’s murder of 43 students with the complicity of the state’s police. (see our article in this issue)

**China:** This autumn, in the northern province of Heilongjiang, 20,000 teachers went on strike against low salaries. This is a rare known example of a labour conflict in the country’s public sector. On December 18<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of police burst into the Artigas Clothing and Fine Leather Goods company in Shenzhen to break up workers who had been on strike for nine days to demand their social insurance and contingency funds of prime mandatory housing. There had been an 11.1% rise in work conflicts compared to the previous year. Most of the conflicts stemmed from unpaid salaries, layoffs, remuneration of insurance and work benefits, among other things.

**Egypt:** “*the 100 workers of the Helwan Iron and Steel Company (...) went on strike and occupation Saturday, October 22, 2014 to primarily demand payment of their “bonus” (profit sharing), for the dismissal of their director and the rehiring of workers previously laid-off, particularly during the December 2013 strike”* (<http://alencontre.org>) They were then suspended

temporarily in order not to be associated by the government to an Islamic demonstration expected a few days later.

**Brazil:** In Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, January 9<sup>th</sup>, thousands of demonstrators protested against the rise in transport costs. In Sao Paulo, the demonstration brought out nearly 30,000 people and many youths carried placards declaring “No to the increase!” Others demanded the readmission of metro employees dismissed during a strike. In Rio, the cost of a bus ticket was raised last Saturday from 3 reais to 3.40 reais, a 13% increase, putting inflation for the year at 6.4%. In June 2013, in the middle of the Confederations Cup, Brazil was shaken by massive demonstrations demanding improvement of public services and criticizing the money invested in the World Cup (June-July 2014). It began with a student protest movement against the increase of public transportation costs.

**USA:** On “Black Friday” (November 28<sup>th</sup>), Walmart workers mobilized across the US. No less than 1600 strikes and demonstrations took place across the country, mobilizing tens of thousands of workers. Workers are demanding a minimum wage of \$15 per hour.

**South Africa:** a strike by employees of the South African Post “*This is the longest strike since the end of 2012*”, the management admits. This strike began with a wildcat in 2013 of temporary workers in Pretoria, exasperated with being chained to fixed-term contracts.

Although not comprehensive, pulling together only essential information that we have received in recent months, this list of workers struggles clearly indicates a real trend and shows the potential and limits of workers’ battles to date. We can summarize them as follows: all continents are affected, in countries both central to capitalism and those emerging, by workers struggles opposing the simultaneous intensification of attacks. To date, these often massive battles remain, essentially, under the political control of the bourgeoisie, particularly its unions. Nevertheless, and despite their sabotage, the fighting continues unabated and some sectors of the most advanced international proletariat tend to free themselves from union and the state control through wildcat strikes, spontaneous movements, indeed by the opposition’s attempts to paralyze and thus confrontation with the state apparatus. It’s precisely on this path that the proletariat in Greece engaged most strongly in its struggle against the effects of the crisis in years 2008-2010.

This is the path that workers should take. It is on this path that communist groups should advance the directions of struggle and adapt their watchwords.

Normand, January 2014

## **Strikes in Germany, Belgium, Great-Britain: the Bourgeoisie Censors the Workers Struggles! (October 20<sup>th</sup> 2014).**

We reproduce here the communiqué that we published on our website ([www.igcl.org](http://www.igcl.org)) and sent to our contacts the very day the Liege and Charleroi railway workers in Belgium launched an illegal wildcat strike while the unions had already planned Days of action and national strikes to control and counter this growing combativity. Besides the immediate potentialities – difficult to assess without being directly on location – it seemed to us important to point out the simultaneity of this fight with repeated strikes in the transportation sector in Germany, with railways and airlines affected. Had we the means to intervene on location, our communiqué would have been more agitational with concrete slogans for extension of the strikes without waiting for the unions' Days of action. The workers' combativity which expressed itself, in particular in the violent confrontations between the workers and the police during the demonstration in Brussels November 6<sup>th</sup>, confirms that there existed in the immediate situation a possibility for the class as a whole; a possibility that, in the end (December 15<sup>th</sup> Day of action), had been quelled by the unions' tactic. Finally, the form "leaflet" of our communiqué could have allowed any worker or militant to reproduce it and distribute it in the assemblies, the demonstrations and workplaces and, thus, to serve as general orientation for which to fight.

**This very day**, October 20, the staff of the Lufthansa (the German flight company) is on strike again. It so takes over the German railway workers strike of last week-end and of last Wednesday. The fact that these struggles paralyze national and international transportation, obliges the bourgeoisie's medias to mention them. Otherwise they could fully discredit themselves.

But, **this very day**, October 20<sup>th</sup>, who – outside Belgium – could know that 5 to 7000 workers demonstrated in Brussels yesterday against the effects of the crisis? Who knows that today, **this very morning**, October 20<sup>th</sup>, the railway workers from Charleroi (*Le Soir* was talking of Liege this morning) are on wildcat strike against the sabotage of the "autonomous union of the train drivers (SACT) [which] «is going to demonstrate its discontent through muscular actions **which will be in the legal framework** and will be announced well in advance so that the customers won't be taken hostage» has it said Sunday night without giving any date" (Belgium newspaper *Le Soir*, October 19<sup>th</sup>, the previous day thus!). Who has known that the railway workers of the Belgium region of Louvière had already, a week ago, gone on wildcat strike?

Who has known – outside Great Britain – that strikes and demonstrations had been held in all the country the whole of last week, under the control of the unions, up to great street demonstrations in London, Glasgow, etc. ?

The bourgeois media systematically censor any news about working class struggles. It is important that the "wildcat" strike, i.e. illegal and against the unions, of the Liege railway workers doesn't represent an example to follow and be elsewhere copied! Then, it is also one of our tasks, it belongs to the revolutionaries with their limited means attempting to by-pass the wall of silence of the bourgeois propaganda; or still the wall of lies and distortions when the ruling class can't silence anymore the active opposition of the workers through the collective and class struggle against the catastrophic effects of the economic crisis on their living and working conditions.

Since the reality is this one: on all continents, in all countries, the working class tries to resist through the struggle. And if the response is still largely insufficient today to make the

bourgeoisie withdraw its attacks, nevertheless it represents an immediate obstacle and an historical danger for capitalism.

The repeated strikes in Germany, even though they remain under the unions' control, express the workers' willingness for struggle. The proletariat in Germany, core of the international proletariat, main European imperialist power, resists the attacks against its living conditions despite the calls for national unity. And this despite the discourse and the growing warlike atmosphere that the German and international bourgeoisie spreads more and more: Ukraine, Middle-East, etc. The depth and the worsening of the end-less economic crisis of capitalism exacerbate both the imperialist rivalries and wars as well as the attacks against the working class. And this in all countries!

The fact that the workers in Germany also struggle against the attacks and the effects of the crisis bring a blatant denial to the lies about the prosperity and vitality of the German capitalist economy. "Example to follow" the capitalist class says in all countries to justify the sacrifices. The railway workers struggle: here is the example to follow everywhere. There is no other solution to best defend our conditions of life faced with the economic crisis. The same is true when it comes to the warlike sounds of marching boots: it is by resisting the crisis that the workers, salaried, proletarians, can also hamper the inescapable march of capitalism towards generalized imperialist war, towards a 3<sup>rd</sup> World War – preparation, march and explosion whose bill, how appalling and bloody it'll be, will be paid, one more time, by the workers. Revolution or War, such is the alternative! There won't be any other choice.

**Beyond the frontiers, our class interests and our struggles are the same !**

**Let's fight back the effects of Capitalism's crisis and its march towards generalized war !**

**Let's fight back against National Unity and the democratic mystification !**

**Let's follow our comrades of Belgium, Great-Britain, and above all of Germany !**

The International Group of the Communist Left  
October 20<sup>th</sup> 2014

## Regroupment of Revolutionaries

### The Current Importance of Groups of the Communist Left

There is a trend nowadays in the proletarian political milieu to underestimate, if not to deny the importance of existing left communist groups. Whether by proclaiming the bankruptcy of left communism, by squandering its political principals one after the other or by refusing to take responsibility as a political vanguard of the working class. It is obvious that the political current represented by the communist left is full of important weaknesses. But these weaknesses, whether they are political or “numeric”, must never diminish the principle which is that the political groups of the left communist tradition must be, are and will be at the forefront of the struggle for the regroupment of revolutionaries into a class party.

The working class, internationally, benefits from a relatively favourable political situation. Its resistance to capitalist austerity is undeniable. Of course, there are no big economic nor political victories. But is it possible to obtain real long term economic gains in the epoch of decadent capitalism? The only real victory resulting from struggle is the growing organization of the working class in political terms, therefore the extension of class consciousness, in order to attack capitalism in a revolutionary fashion. Left communist groups are the main factor in the process of the extension of working class organization. Thus, their importance cannot be denied nor diminished.

#### Real weaknesses of the communist left

##### *Political weaknesses*

There are real political weaknesses in today's communist left. One of its historically most important organizations, the International Communist Current, squanders its political principles without any shame. As we are short on space to write about this subject, readers can refer to our previous issues<sup>6</sup>. The second political current in the left communist tradition, the Internationalist Communist Tendency, although politically healthy, refuses to take the role that it objectively has to take, which is to serve as a point of reference for militants or political groups interested in or getting closer to the left. On the contrary, it tends to try to build its own chapel without confronting the other political currents.

This results in a situation where it is difficult for militants or groups more or less isolated to identify

themselves with the real historic tradition of the communist left represented by the ICC and ICT, a tradition which is clearly for the regroupment of revolutionaries into a class party. The flip side of the coin is that this situation leaves space for all the anti-party and semi-anarchist currents like councilism, academism or ultra-left. Even worse, these semi-anarchist currents have some influence, more or less pronounced, in the traditional left communist organizations to the point that these organizations, the ICC and ICT, have become more and more open to anarchism<sup>7</sup>. It is then not surprising that the issues of the importance of the class party and the duty of militants to regroup themselves in a political party are taking a hit.

##### *Numeric weaknesses*

The era of mass workers parties ended with the betrayal of the Second International. The left fractions within Social Democracy were able to learn the lessons from that failure in order to restore the communist program and later build a new International. Among these lessons, there is for example the rejection of parliamentarism and unionism, but also the rejection of the corollary of the first two : the mass party with blurred boundaries. With the birth of the Communist International, it was the victory of the principle which is that the class party chooses its militants rigorously on the basis of a clear program. In short, it was the victory of the party of militants against the party of electors. This has the superficial consequence that the proletarian political organization is smaller in terms of number of militants.

The size of the proletarian organization is also intimately linked to the historical period of class struggle. Without being a mechanical nor automatic link, the number of militants tends to increase in periods of open struggle and decrease in periods of defeat for the working class. This was the case for the left communist groups during and after the Second World War. Their number and their political presence was reduced to its simplest form. Does it mean that these groups were nothing and had no influence in the class? If we take an immediatist point of view, indeed, we can

6 . 20th Congress of the International Communist Current, *Revolution or War* #1

7 . From the revolutionary point of view, the class frontier is between Marxism and Anarchism. From the opportunist point of view, the frontier is between revolutionary Marxism and Anarchism on one side against reformist Marxism and Anarchism on the other... see The communist left and internationalist anarchism, Part 1: What we have in common (ICC, *World Revolution* #336) as well as Marxism and Anarchism (TCI, [www.leftcom.org](http://www.leftcom.org)).

think that these groups had no influence. But if we take the historical point of view, we quickly note the huge importance of these groups. Not only do current left communist groups owe their existence to them, but the political lessons drawn by these groups have left us a legacy. *“In such a period, only small revolutionary groups manage to survive, a solution ensuring continuity, less organizational than ideological, condensing within their ranks the past experience of the movement and the class struggle, bridging the party of yesterday with that of tomorrow, between the height of the struggle and the maturity of class consciousness in the past period of flux towards its supersession in the new period of flux in the future. In these groups continues the ideological life of the class, the self-criticism of its struggles, the critical re-examination of previous ideas, the constant elaboration of its program, the maturation of its consciousness and the formation of new militants for the next step of its revolutionary assault.”* (The Nature and the Political Function of the Political Party of the Proletariat, *Internationalisme* #38, Gauche communiste de France, 1948, our translation in RG #1).

May '68 represents a political awakening for the proletariat. It is the end of the counter-revolution and we see the reappearance of a certain class consciousness in which the process of formation was obviously not linear. In parallel, there was also the emergence, the formation and the consolidation of the two contemporary tendencies of the communist left, the ICC and IBRP<sup>8</sup>. Unfortunately for the first current, a lull in class struggle around '90-2000 created a situation where the '68 generation ran out of breath, to the point that today there are more “ex-ICC” than actual ICC militants. The problem is that ex-ICC militants, because of a lack of political conviction, either joined the semi-anarchist milieu described earlier or simply stopped militancy. So it is that the strength of the communist left in general, and the ICC current in particular, boils down to a trickle.

### **Role of the revolutionaries and its importance**

#### ***Active militants, stakeholders of the class struggle***

If the role of the groups of the communist left was only to politically influence the most proletarians possible, it is true we would be far from our goal. But it would be to adopt a dangerous immediatist point of view. From the historic point of view and from the construction of the class party point of view, our importance lies in the bridge that we<sup>9</sup> represent between the traditional currents, ICC and ICT, and the future party. And we are all the more important given our reduced number.

Moreover, we said in the first issue of our review : “ Conscious bearers of the communist perspective, organized accordingly, they are a guarantee of the direction and the means leading to this revolutionary future. And the reality of their influence and of their presence, and especially the real existence of the party, is in turn an expression within the working class of the reality of this balance of power between the classes and the degree of extension of class consciousness. But as reflection or product of an historical relation of forces between the classes, the highest expressions of class consciousness must become an active and primary factor of this consciousness and of the evolution of this balance of power in assuming and in struggling for the political direction of their class.(...) This is why it is now this political minority’s particular responsibility to reach out and unify its forces, not simply to influence current working class struggles as far as possible, but especially to be ready to participate in the formation of the international and internationalist class party.”<sup>10</sup>

We can't predict with certainty that the formation of the future class party will be impelled by the current groups of the Communist Left, so real are their weaknesses. It is indeed possible that an insurrectionary situation or dual power appears without an international party politically prepared beforehand. Although possible<sup>11</sup>, this situation is not really desirable. The Communist Left groups represent a legacy. This legacy is the political lessons accumulated by hundreds of years of class struggle. “(...)theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.”, as said the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels. The point is not to oppose a so-called omniscient avant-garde to a stupid proletarian mass. However, the Communist Left crystallizes the political experience of militant and workers groups which have already thought, faced, solved, discussed the big questions which raise themselves in front of the struggling proletariat. It would be irresponsible to leave the young generations disarmed in front of political questions already resolved by the Left Communist groups. The capitalist barbarity cannot last eternally.

The existence of the Communist Left is the demonstration of the revolutionary potential of the proletariat : it represents the most revolutionary fraction of the working class and there lies its historical importance. Now, we must not put ourselves at the tail of the movement in fear of imposing on it our views as also we don't have the duty to lead it like a general leads an army. We have to, through our experience, fertilize

8 . Today the Internationalist Communist Tendency.

9 . “We” represents all the partyist currents of the Communist Left.

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

11 . For example, Berlin in 1918 and the first days of the Spanish civil war in 1936.

the revolutionary potential of the proletariat while indicating to it “the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement” (The Communist Manifesto).

### ***War or Revolution***

The current period is one of massive clashes between social classes. Proletariat against bourgeoisie, that is the face of the class struggle in modern society. Both sides of the barricades have their own class interests and their own class consciousness. The issue of the struggles ahead is communism or capitalism, socialism or barbarism, REVOLUTION OR WAR.

The Communist Left is at the moment the only political

current claiming its roots in the proletariat which defends the communist perspective against capitalist barbarity. All other false friends of the proletariat, the leftists of all stripes, are only defending particular variants of capitalism. They propose a “kinder, gentler capitalism” : democratism, anti-fascism, anti-racism, municipalism, commonism, self-management, unionism. These ideologies deny the main social classes and especially the proletariat ; they contribute to weakening the proletariat’s constant struggle within capitalist society and its final fight against it.

Again, here lies the historical and political importance of the present groups of the Communist Left.

Robin, January 2015.

## **Montréal : Open Meeting of the IGCL: Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>.**

The next meeting in Montréal will be Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm at the Loblaws, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 2925 rue Rachel E., Montréal (near the subway station Préfontaine).

## **Open Meetings with the IGCL**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Debate within the Proletarian Camp

### Bourgeois Democracy, Internet... and the So-called Individual's Equality

The following text is a synthesis of a contradictory discussion we had within our group about the use of Internet, forums and social networks (like Facebook) by the working class and in particular by the communist groups and their members. These new media – whose main utility is to favour and accelerate the circulation of capital and commodities – also present some interest for bourgeois ideology to foster the belief in the definitive advent of Democracy where everyone, each isolated individual, would have access to the knowledge and free expression of their individuality. This mystification consequently destroys even more the social links of any kind, and primarily the class collective links.

As such, the ideology which goes with these new media exerts its negative influence on the working class struggles – even though it still only remains an auxiliary which reinforces the mystifications and the sabotages that the bourgeois forces put forwards in the strikes and demonstrations.

On the other hand, it is far from being without effect on the communist groups at the level of their intervention. Should they carry on publishing regular publications and journals on paper and developing their militant diffusion in the struggles, the demonstrations, the strikes, the assemblies, the political meetings, in the streets, while one can be content with the publication on a web site? Relating to the debates between political groups, why not be content with the Internet forums and social networks each one having its own sympathizers network and Facebook "friends"? Finally, with respect to their internal life, why should they carry on holding formal meetings of the group while e-mail and "miraculous" links thanks to Skype or others seem to enable maintaining and developing permanent contact and exchanges?

For us, the Internet can only be a technical means, the state, police (surveillance) and above all ideological, control of which is even more efficient than that which the bourgeoisie could exert beforehand with the telephone – to give an example of a technical tool which can appear equivalent. Even though we can hardly do without it in the so-called "modern" society of today, as we could hardly do without the use of the telephone, the communists must limit its utilization and, above all, fight against the ideological mystification which accompanies its development at the risk of losing themselves and liquidating a great part of the experience and the lessons of the workers movement at the level the working class struggles as well as at the level of the struggle for the

future communist party.

We encourage our readers and the communist groups to look at this question, to contribute – by participation and criticism – to our reflection, and to be part of the denunciation and the fight against democratism in general and its "Internet" version in particular. Amongst the few serious contributions we know on this subject, it is important to refer to the article the PCInt-ICT wrote on this question in its Italian review *Prometeo* #4 (2010), [Libertà virtuale e catene reali - La battaglia per il controllo di Internet](#). Even though we share good part of the arguments, we remain more doubtful on the possibility for communists to lead « *a battle for the Internet control* » and to « *oppose (...) to the controls and the censorship on the Internet forums* » [« *Dobbiamo opporci (...) ai controlli e alla censura sui forum del web* »]. Besides the limits (and even the dangers) of such a battle, we think that the *Prometeo* text tends to underestimate the political and ideological utilization of these new media by capitalism and the ruling class especially against the working class struggles and its communist minorities.

#### 1) Bourgeois Democracy and the Individuals' So-called Equality

Bourgeois Democracy essentially bases itself on an abstract vision of the individual. Or more commonly: one man, one voice (one vote); each one being equal to the other. For a long time, Marxism, the revolutionary theory of the proletariat - as exploited and revolutionary class – has denounced the mystification of the equality between the individuals belonging to the different social classes; in particular, « *can there be equality between the exploited and the exploiters? (...) Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the **formal** equality proclaimed by the "democracy" of the capitalists and the thousands of **real** limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into **wage-slaves*** » (Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*). In reality, « *although the bourgeoisie represents a minority within society, the democratic state represents the system of armed force organised for the purpose of preserving the capitalist relations of production* » (Thesis of the Abstentionist Communist Faction of the Italian Socialist Party, 1920). Contrary to the democratic bourgeois ideology, Marxism does not claim equality between individuals, neither in the framework of capitalist society, nor even in the framework of Communism. It is Capital which makes women and men equal by alienating them to

wage labor as proletarians. And if the revolutionaries are the first to put forwards “egalitarian” demands in the working class struggles, in particular in wage demands, it is not by principle, and less still for reasons of morality (both would be ~~there~~ abstractions) but as a means for the extension and unification of the struggle. « *The concept of a socialist society as a realm of **equality** is a one-sided French concept deriving from the old “liberty, equality, fraternity,” a concept which was justified in that, in its own time and place, it signified a phase of development, but which, like all the one-sided ideas of earlier socialist schools, ought now to be superseded, since they produce nothing but mental confusion, and more accurate ways of presenting the matter have been discovered* » (Engels, Letter to Bebel, March 18<sup>th</sup> 1875, emphasis by Engels).

The mystification on equality between individuals within capitalist society and its democratic state results in the deception of the free political choice by the “people” through the affirmation of a majority vote, the “people” being understood as the sum of so-called “free and equal” individuals – this being another abstraction under capitalism. « *The division of society into classes distinguished by economic privilege clearly removes all value from majority decision-making. Our critique refutes the deceitful theory that the democratic and parliamentary state machine which arose from modern liberal constitutions is an organization of all citizens in the interests of all citizens* » (The Democratic Principle, Bordiga, 1922).

The democratic lies and mystifications which base themselves on an abstract, ahistorical, non-material, ultimately metaphysical, notion of the individual are at first used to impose on the exploited masses, primarily the proletariat, « *the democratic republic (...) this final state form of bourgeois society* » (Marx, Critique of the Gotha Program, 1875) by denying the reality of the social classes, above all the ruling bourgeois class and the exploited proletariat, as well as their irreconcilable antagonism.

## **2) The So-called "Sovereignty" of the Individual**

But the bourgeois mystification does not simply confine itself to foster the belief in pure political democracy (elections, parliament, etc), to erase from the consciousnesses the reality of the class dictatorship that bourgeois democracy does exercise, and to deny any reality to the class struggle. The democratic bourgeois ideology goes much further and tends to impregnate all the moments and all the spaces of social life to the detriment of the vision and, above all, the collective action and reflection; i.e. of the working class as Marxism has relentlessly demonstrated and defended. The democratic bourgeois ideology tends to make each individual a “unity” in itself, autonomous, « *Without any doubt, the individual is a unit from a biological point of view, but one cannot make this individual the basis of social organization without falling into metaphysical nonsense. From a social perspective, all the individual units do not*

*have the same value. The collectivity is born from relations and groupings in which the status and activity of each individual do not derive from an individual function but from a collective one determined by the multiple influences of the social milieu* » (The Democratic Principle, Bordiga, 1922). The “proletarian” individuals are nothing by themselves. They are within the historical collective which represents their class, both exploited and revolutionary class. « *This does not mean that we resuscitate the illusory myth of individualism, which wishes to liberate the human “ego” from external influences, especially since these influences tend to become ever more complex and the life of the individual ever more an indistinguishable part of a collective life. On the contrary, the parameters of the problem are changed, with will and freedom attributed to a class, a class destined to become the unitary human grouping itself, a grouping which one day will struggle against the adverse forces of the external physical world alone* » (Theses for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of Italy presented by the Left, Lyon, 1926, [www.sinistra.net](http://www.sinistra.net), our emphasis).

## **3) Capitalist State's Totalitarianism and the Atomization of the Proletarian Individuals**

With the historical period of capitalism's decline – or period of ruling imperialism – and the increasing state totalitarianism which goes with it, this democratist and individualist ideology – capitalist class's ideology – never ceased to develop up to the caricatural level we experience today, particularly with the utilization of Internet and the social networks. In many aspects, Georges Orwell's novel, “1984”, that it would be wrong to confine to a simple denunciation of the Nazi and Stalinist capitalist states, has become reality. With the Internet and its “cookies”, the GPS and Facebook, not only *is Big Brother watching you*, but above all each one, as isolated individual, is forced one way or another to submit to this permanent dictatorship which reaches all the recesses of social life: at work of course through the management ideology and the “internet-intranet” networks; movement and transportation with the mobile telephones and the GPS; at home, in the so-called “home privacy” of the Internet; Skype and the social networks. If television had been a great factor for the development of state and democratic bourgeois totalitarianism as well as a great booster of social atomization, at least it was not “interactive”, each one remaining passive in front of the media. Today, the isolated individual – most of the time salaried or unemployed proletariat – apparently, superficially, becomes actor of the media and of their own social atomization – and this not only from time to time in the elections, but daily, permanently, at home, during the commute, during their spare time, at work... Even worse, the individual ends up believing that the only remaining social space is the one, **virtual**, of the Internet and the social networks: is it not there, by paying, that the single persons look for their soul mate and to establish love relations? Moreover the fact that capitalism transforms love relations and sentiments into...

commodities, the space of social relations as intimate as love is more and more reduced to the Internet and so-called “social” networks – it goes the same with the “social networks” as for the *newspeak* of “1984”: they are social as « *freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength* ».

Even more dangerous still, the Internet enabled democratic bourgeois ideology to achieve a particularly mystifying dimension: everybody, all individuals, can “freely express themselves” at will without particular financial means, without a newspaper, without particular social relations, etc... This is the top of formal and abstract democracy; finally, each individual is equal to the other one: from one human being, one vote, the Internet makes us pass to “one human being, one permanent voice” (or “post”). At the risk of appearing as old “squares” in front of this modernity – have not some, up to revolutionaries, spoken of the Internet as factor of the revolution? –, it is in the past and our class history that we find the theoretical denunciation of the democratic and individualist ideology of which Internet has become the height.

« (...) *If it is admitted from the outset that the vote, that is, the judgement, the opinion, the consciousness of each elector – we can add today of each “Facebook friend” or participant to the forums – has the same weight in delegating power for the administration of the collective business. It is already evident that this conception is unrealistic and unmaterialist because it considers each individual to be a perfect “unit” within a system made up of many potentially equivalent units, and instead of appraising the value of the individual's opinion in the light of his manifold conditions of existence, that is, his relations with others, it postulates this value a priori with the hypothesis of the “sovereignty” of the individual. Again this amounts to denying that the consciousness of men is a concrete reflection of the facts and material conditions of their existence, to viewing it as a spark ignited with the same providential fairness in each organism, healthy or impaired, tormented or harmoniously satisfied in all its needs, by some undefinable supreme bestower of life.* »  
(The Democratic Principle, quoted above).

At the same time, it is also the negation of social collective what ever it may be. An apparently “neutral” example in class and political term: it is now common to see “the people” having a party with friends (collective social framework) isolating themselves a good time to send or read SMS or short mails without any interest or urgency with another individual not present at the party (or even sometimes present) and so to forget, even deny, the collective social event!

This “anti-social”, anti-collective, individualist corrupting influence gets into all the recesses of social life and pollutes it facilitated by the ideological utilization of the Internet and the social networks – but only facilitated because it existed beforehand as product of the democratist and individualist ideology. Internet worsens it and accelerates its spreading.

From the class point of view, that is from the proletarian political point of view, each individual, worker, salaried, employee, unemployed, each exploited, ends up permanently and increasingly under surveillance and competition with the others by totalitarian capitalism through the means of Internet. This new medium provides to the whole capitalist state apparatus the means of surveillance and above all of repression in the social life in general as well as in the workplaces. We'll come back on this on the following section. As such, the Internet and its utilization by capitalism worsens the living and working conditions of the working class and the ideology associated with the Internet strengthens the totalitarian stranglehold of capital on labor, that is on the proletarians.

#### **4) Internet Ideology Participates to the Sabotage of the Working Class Struggles**

The democratic ideology through its Internet variant also pollutes and weakens the workers and communist movement by aggravating even more the breaking with its traditions and, partly, by seeking to distort the conditions of struggle of the working class so that it can better paralyze them. The particular Internet democratist ideology has favoured and participated to promote the “Indignados” [“the Indignant ones”] movements and the fetishization of self-organization and assemblies in which everyone could, and had to, express 3 minutes maximum. If often it was forbidden to speak on behalf of a political group, on the contrary it did not matter that every individual repeated the same thing as the previous one. This pure democracy is a trap from the point of view of the interests and goals of the working class struggle against capitalism. The role of a workers assembly is not to make every individual attending it speak but to decide what are the immediate interests and aims of the struggle so that the most favourable relation of forces against capital can develop. In general, there is leading guide: the extension and the unification of the fight to other sectors of the working class. Faced with this practical necessity of the fight and the particular decisions to take in relation to the different moments and conditions of each struggle, the key is that the political orientations which affirm this dynamic towards unity and the ones which oppose it can confront in the assembly. And if only few speakers, even only two, can be their bearers by posing the terms of the “debate”, that is by assuming and bringing the immediate political confrontation, and that they clearly appear to the eyes of the assembly – without be submerged under floods of 3 minutes talks on all and everything – then the “proletarian democracy”, the “democracy of the workers' struggle”, serves the class struggle and its immediate and long term goals.

Here is precisely what the democratist and individualist ideology – of which the Internet has become the most appropriate vehicle – aims at liquidating by flooding the issues and the terms of the confrontations that the workers, particularly **the most militant and the most conscious**,

must inescapably and necessarily assume in the struggles of the working class against bourgeois political and trade unionist forces. These forces do intervene, and will intervene including in the revolutionary period, in the struggles and the unitary organizations of the class: assemblies, demonstrations, meetings, committees, workers councils, etc. Emptied of their political content and objectives – decision to strike, definition of the demands and the goals of the struggle and the means of its spreading and its unification at first; decision and organization of the insurrection, then of the exercise of power by the councils or soviets –, inescapably these organs of struggle fall into the bourgeoisie's hands who knows how to paralyze and emasculate them in the name of the democratic virtue in itself, supposed “natural”, of these political organs.

From this point of view, the democratic ideology – to which the individualist visions reinforce and give credence to – becomes the apostle of the fetishization of “self-organization”, often today of “assembleism”, to better empty the organization of the struggle by the workers themselves of its class content and potential. Our generations of proletarians, particularly the youngest, are influenced by the Internet democratic ideology and are used to instant individual exchanges of mails and “posts” on the social networks, that each idea or comment has the same value as the others, etc. As a result, they tend to confound the debates and the confrontation of the conflicting positions and orientations with the material, temporal, possibility of each individual to have their say. Instead of favouring the interest of the assembly and the struggle, that is the class collective, one favours the individual expressions of the largest number of people on behalf of formal democracy emptied of any political and class content.

The use of smartphones for informing and calling to gatherings or spontaneous demonstrations is today presented as the example to follow. Each individual so warns his friend, or friends, the people he knows. One thing is to inform somebody by phone on the location of the spontaneous demonstration – we have nothing against it in itself. On the contrary, another thing is to substitute the **individual** utilization of smartphones to the **collective** sending of massive delegations for going to get **the workers en masse at such or such workplace** so that they join the demonstration. Yet, more and more, we can note that numbers of participants in the street demonstrations, even when they are massive – whether called by the unions or not – come **individually** and not in a **collective** delegation or procession. Certainly, we have nothing against the fact one worker decides alone to come to a demonstration – it is better than nothing – but it nevertheless remains that this expresses a weakness and a difficulty of the working class. And, since we cannot “make a virtue of necessity”, we fight against the idea that it would be an example to follow as well as any apology of the so-called “modern” method. In this way, Facebook and

Twitter are presented as tools and means of the working class struggle and its extension to the detriment of the genuine organizations of the struggles which physically gather together workers such as the massive delegations or the workers assemblies.

### **5) The Pressure of Democratism and Individualism upon the Communist Groups**

Political opportunism expresses the penetration of bourgeois ideology within the revolutionary camp, within the communist vanguard organizations of the proletariat. Democratism and individualism reach it too, even more strongly, after one century of increasing state capitalism at the economic level as well as social and ideological. We can say that this phenomenon has sped up dramatically these last decades, including and even particularly in the ranks of the vanguard organizations, weakening them accordingly, favouring the dispersion of these political groups (that the class still does not recognize), their desertion and individualism. Not only are the communist political groups very few and very dispersed, but besides there certainly are more individuals declaring themselves revolutionaries outside these groups, and justifying it, than these groups have members. Consequences: first individualism within the Proletarian Camp – i.e. groups and elements which claim communism and its theoretical, political and **organizational** tradition – is today theoreticized and develops to the extent that these comrades reject the communist activity which can only be organized and centralized in a collective organization; later, democratism spreads to these people with an individualist approach who defend, in the name of the individual freedom of critique and revision of the program and positions of the past, that each idea or expression is as valid, *equivalent*, as another; and in particular as valid whether it comes from an individual or a group, or a communist organization. For us, that is not the case! All “revolutionary ideas” are not of equal value and one criteria for assessing them, besides their political content, is the fact that they are voiced by political groups and organizations or by non-organized individuals. Unlike the “revolutionary” individual who is not accountable to anyone but themselves, or to their “friends”, the political group is accountable for the history of the working class movement and for its own history at the programmatic, theoretical, political and organizational levels. As such, and contrary to the individual, it is not free. As such, it cannot consider any idea as valid, *equivalent*, as another. As such too, it has to discuss, debate, and fight the other positions and “ideas”, of *unequal value*, that it does not share.

The Internet and its by-products are not at the origin of this specific weight of democratism and individualism within the Proletarian Camp. Nevertheless, it comes to serve these two mystifications and becomes one of its main vehicles through the propaganda and the illusions about its utilization and by... its “easy” and daily utilization which

veils also the emptiness of the real action, that is class action. And above all, the Internet and its social networks favour the individual expressions to the detriment of the collective and organized political expressions, that is of organization and party.

Instead of the political debates and confrontations between political currents and organizations, one increasingly tends to see and consider them as confrontations and quarrels between individuals. From this point of view, the utilization of the social networks and the Internet which are greatly favoured by the bourgeoisie, does not confine itself, far from it, to the increased possibility of state and police control and surveillance; but also to pollute the minds with individualist vision and practices which derail from collective action and reflection, particularly class action and reflection, up to denying and excluding them, including within the political vanguard of the proletariat.

### **6) Internet and its By-Products: a Means of Repression**

As a technical tool or means, the Internet is controlled and managed by the present power, that is by capitalist states. It is true at the economic level which remains the main dimension of this media and which sees an acceleration as never before of capital and commodity circulation and the wild search for capitalist profit in all the corners of the planet and social life – up to love relations as we have mentioned earlier. But also, by the ideological and propaganda utilization of which it is also the vehicle, the Internet and the technical means that go with it, have become the favoured space for state surveillance and repression. It is also important to underline that the democratic states are much more efficient in this repression since they do not need, contrary to so-called non-democratic states, to cut off the network and the access to Internet (nevertheless, the day they will think it necessary, they will not hesitate to do so at once). We will not come back here on the revelations by WikiLeaks and other “scandals” around the activities of the secrete services such as the American NSA. Actually, for whoever may reflect on it for two minutes and refer to the various revelations of the bourgeois press itself, the omnipotence and omnipresence of the police surveillance and repression on the Internet is obvious.

Unfortunately, the democratic illusions amongst the revolutionaries still remain so widespread. This is an old disease of the workers movement; above all in the countries with strong democratic traditions which are often at the same time the historical centers of capitalism. Without coming back on the illusion according to which the bourgeoisie of the democratic countries will never reproduce Rosa Luxemburg's murder directly sponsored and executed by German Social Democracy – it is always worth reminding –, our generations of revolutionaries who never lived open and massive repression – except a few cases – are particularly infected by this disease to the point of neglecting the most elementary means of “discretion”. Of course, it is important to find a point of balance

between the immediate benefit that the modern means can provide and the long-term concern for protecting the communist activity from repression – and thus to limit the state surveillance. How many political discussions by phone, as means of facility, could and should have been avoided at the condition of waiting for the group meeting? Or for regular mail? Yet this political concern did not forbid the use of the telephone – sometimes indispensable for the good daily functioning – **but should have limited its utilization**, firstly because of state surveillance and, secondly, because its excessive use implied practices, debates in particular, outside the collective control and life of the group. It goes the same for Internet except that... this medium is even more under surveillance and controlled by the bourgeois state and that it can still more easily –only because it can put in direct, oral and visual, contact more than 2 persons – substitute itself to regular collective meetings of the group.

The illusions in bourgeois democracy and the political and organizational concessions to it, which are still reinforced by the Internet ideology, have negative effects at the level of surveillance and repression – including indirect for instance through a greater ease for police manipulation and infiltration – as well as at the level of the very functioning of the organization, whether it is group, fraction or communist party, and its theoretical and political understanding.

### **7) The Social Forums and Networks Liquidate the Political Debates**

Is there any point of meeting since we can discuss and see each other by Skype at home? With no effort. What is the point of **organizing** internal debates and, if possible, writing texts when everybody can debate with everybody and anyone instantaneously, with immediate “response” on the social forums and networks? The ease of utilization of the Internet and its by-products, each one at home in front their computer, each one giving their word and opinion on anything on the forums and networks, develops the cancer of individualism and the rejection of any collective, regular, organized and centralized activity; in particular of any collective argued and contradictory debate as, nevertheless, unique weapon enabling to clarify the political questions and to regroup the revolutionary energies within a collective and militant framework; in brief, the individualist and democratic “Internet” ideology aims at liquidating any communist, or “party”, activity.

Actually, instead of internal and external debate of the political groups – in which sometimes individuals or sympathizers can also participate – we witness as never before the development of interventions on all and anything by individuals, more or less revolutionary according to them, often isolated, most of the time in the grip of immediate emotion, often guided by their ego and their will to “exist” as personality, in the Internet forums. Instead of organized and centralized debates whose aim is the clarification of the political positions – for instance by

conclusions and practical political decisions, i.e. militant decisions – we see an accumulation of individuals' pseudo-contributions which, very often, do not respond to each other or if they do, do not refer to any political tradition or, worse, to the most dangerous. Obviously it is even worse on the social networks like Facebook. There, emotion, personal feelings, immediate reactions, lack of reflection and argument, in short the crassest and roughest individualism reign supreme. But do not criticize at the risk your "Facebook friend" deletes the "post" or the thread of the "chat" after having accused you of insulting them and not respecting their thought... as valid as yours – that is precisely why it is so impolite and inappropriate to discuss it! As a result: all this ends up often by personal insults or by silence; in short, it is all except the debate, including and above all one in which conflicting positions confront each other, aiming at political clarification and, by the way, it is all except the genuine respect we owe to workers and revolutionary militants.

But the *petit-bourgeois* affected by democratism and individualism will be satisfied; they will indulge themselves: they will express "their" idea and above all assert their "personality".

### **8) Internet and Communist Activity**

Obviously, the communist groups as well as the proletarians in their daily life, are constrained to utilize the new media that capitalism controls and imposes. They even can find in it an immediate interest as for the utilization of the telephone for instance. It would be stupid because almost impossible to not use E-mail, or the possibilities that the setting up of the website offers. But it is important to consider them as modern technical tools that the communists must put at their service as much as possible – while knowing that the bourgeoisie keeps and will keep the grip on this tool it can cut off at any moment as long as it controls State power. Does the setting up of a website justify the stopping of any regular revolutionary press? We do not think so. On the contrary. First, because as long as the bourgeoisie's State power is not destroyed and replaced by the power of the revolutionary proletariat, that is the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the ruling class can at any moment interrupt and silence the website – even easier than the paper press. But also because we think that it is the frequency and the regularity of a journal or a review which determines the organisation, the "layout", of the presentation and the activity of a communist group's Internet site – and not the opposite. This is the reason why we refuse to utilize our site as a blog with the publication of our articles one after the other according to their final writing. The Internet site of a communist organization must also have a militant dimension; or rather must express the militant dimension of the communist group. In

particular, it has to treat its statements, leaflets, communiqués, articles, etc., on a hierarchical and priority basis – and not one after the other. In this sense too, there is no equality between the statements. They have not the same value and their layout is determined by the political priorities and orientations.

Thus, far from us is the idea of a return to the pre-digital age even though the domination of the bourgeoisie over digital media remains complete. But a preoccupation and a struggle in all cases must animate us against the revival of democratic and individualist ideologies and mystifications that the Internet and its social networks have enabled to provoke. For that, for this fight, we do not invent anything. We just content ourselves modestly and no doubt incompletely – we wait for criticisms – to try to base ourselves on the theoretical criticism of democratic ideology and mystification made by Marxism in general and, more particularly here, by Bordiga and the Communist Party of Italy almost a century ago. It seems to us still more present and valid today faced with the new media, Internet and Facebook, and the ideology which goes with them:

« **Setting out from the individual-unit** in order to draw social conclusions and to construct social blueprints or even in order to deny society, **is setting out from an unreal supposition** which, even in its most modern formulations, only amounts to refurbishing the concepts of religious revelation and creation and of a spiritual life which is not dependent upon natural and organic life. The divine creator - or a single power governing the destiny of the universe has given each individual this elementary property of being an autonomous well-defined molecule endowed with consciousness, will and responsibility within the social aggregate, independent of contingent factors deriving from the physical influence of the environment. **Only the appearance of this religious and idealist conception is modified in the doctrine of democratic liberalism or libertarian individualism.** The soul as a spark from the supreme Being, the subjective sovereignty of each elector, or **the unlimited autonomy of the citizen** of a society without laws - these are so many sophisms which, in the eyes of the Marxist critique, are tainted with the same infantile idealism, no matter how resolutely "materialist" the first bourgeois liberals and anarchists may have been. » (The Democratic Principle, our emphasis).

Is this not a particularly acute and sharp criticism of the "Internet" democratic ideology that the revolutionary class (and above all its political organizations) must fight with all of the strength at their disposal?

The IGCL

## Struggle against Political Opportunism

The IGCL has decided to take on board the pamphlet that the Internal Fraction of the ICC (IFICC) had published in 2008. We reproduce here the introduction we have made for this republication. This pamphlet (only in French and Spanish) is available at the price of 3 dollars or 2,50 euros plus the mailing expenses: write to our e-mail address : [intleftcom@gmail.com](mailto:intleftcom@gmail.com).

*Proletarian Morality, class struggle and revisionism* was published first in 2008 by the Internal Fraction of the ICC. The introduction of that time made by the IFICC underlined that « all along the history of the workers movement, Marxism has highlighted how revisionism (...) has introduced ideological themes of the bourgeoisie (...) the values, the morality, the interests and, in a general way, bourgeois ideology within the working class movement by way of “general” science, of “abstract” philosophy, of “human” morality and interests ». As such, this pamphlet is, and will continue to be, a particular moment amongst many others, a modest but nevertheless real contribution of the workers and communist movement for its defense of Marxism and its permanent fight against the penetration of bourgeois ideology in its ranks – especially within its political organizations.

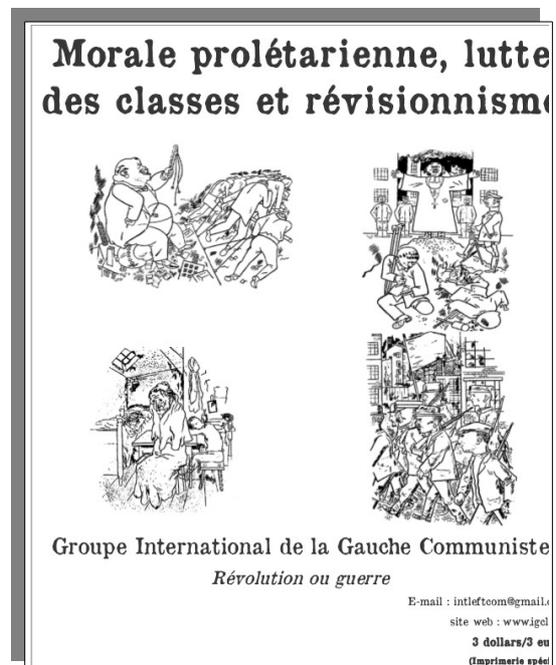
Indeed, the writing which directed the publication of articles first in the IFICC Bulletin in 2007, then combined in a pamphlet, had the primary aim of an immediate fight against the penetration within the International Communist Current of idealist theories which were one more step in the opportunist and revisionist drift of this organization; and this with the hope of a class reaction in its own ranks. This increasing political drift of the ICC had given place to the publication of a text “Marxism and Ethics” in the *International Review* #127 and 128 (2006-2007).

Today, we intend to defend the political and organizational legacy of the Communist Left that this organization is giving up and looks to liquidate. In this sense, the IGCL claims this continuity of **struggle against any opportunist position, in particular against the one presently defended by the official ICC on morality**, by taking on, including in a critical manner, the experience of the ICC fractions (IFICC and FICL) and the ICC itself – if only because of the adoption of some of its basic and historical platform positions. As such, we republish this pamphlet under our name, the IGCL.

Because, if the ICC now belongs for a great part to the past, it nevertheless remains that the fight against the revisionist and idealist thesis that it propagates, remains permanent. Besides their opposition to Marxism, or Historical Materialism, that is the revolutionary theory of the proletariat, the premises of the ICC as to the existence of “human morality”, “of general moral interest” (see their text “Marxism and Ethics”, 2006), or still a “natural moral consciousness” (see their recent draft of “Thesis on morale”) are the expressions of bourgeois ideology, particularly under its democratic form, which won’t disappear with this organization.

This is why this pamphlet, as modest and limited as it may be, remains and will remain a moment and a means of this struggle against political opportunism within the workers ranks and, more widely, against bourgeois ideology.

The IGCL, October 2014



## Public Meeting of the Group *Critique Sociale* (Paris, October 2014) : Rosa Luxemburg, as Lenin, Defends the Proletarian Party against the Bourgeois Democracy

October 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 in Paris, the political group *Critique Sociale* (CS) held a public meeting on the occasion of the publication in French of the 4<sup>th</sup> volume of Rosa Luxemburg's complete works by the Smolny Editions. This volume contains in particular the book she wrote in prison, in 1915, *The Junius Pamphlet* (or *The Crisis of Social Democracy*). **First and foremost** saluted by Lenin, despite his criticisms, as « *a splendid Marxian work* », *Junius* denounces the imperialist nature of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and the betrayal of proletarian internationalism by the Social Democratic parties of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International. Its political lessons are especially actual at the time when, because the economic crisis obliges it, the imperialist rivalries and wars aggravate as a prelude for a 3<sup>rd</sup> generalized imperialist war if the international proletariat does not succeed to oppose and bring down capitalism. By clearly claiming the historical alternative war or revolution, *Junius* remains still today the issue of a political fight between the classes : « *Today, we face the choice (...) : either the triumph of imperialism (...). Or the victory of socialism* » ; an « *either/or* » insists R. Luxemburg, which excludes any third way such as a peaceful outcome within capitalism or a peaceful path to socialism. But to claim the political lessons of *Junius*, it is necessary to acknowledge the place its author had in the struggle of the Marxist Left and the political currents that embodied it. Yet since the opportunist, then Stalinist, theorization of "Leninism" after Lenin's death, the political opportunism has never ceased opposing a "democratic" anti-party R. Luxemburg against a pro-party "dictator" Lenin up to the point that clearly bourgeois left political forces, such as the Socialist Parties, have not hesitated – what shame, those who murdered her! – to take over this mystification. Behind the dogma of "Leninism" and its double "Luxemburgism", both "isms" liquidate the political experience and lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

The presentation made by CS which claims to be... "Luxemburgist", fully silenced the fact that most of R. Luxemburg's fight developed alongside the Bolsheviks and Lenin on the questions of principle, including the one of the Party « *leader of the proletariat* » (*Junius Pamphlet*). For our part, the IGCL, we intervened immediately by focusing on the unity of the struggle led by her and Lenin (to limit ourselves to these two personalities who are, ultimately, only the highest expressions of Marxist Left political currents). We quoted the journal of the Italian Fraction in the 1930s, *Bilan* #27 which rejects « *the shameful speculations which (...) proclaim the bankruptcy of "Leninism" and the triumph of "Luxemburgism"* ». At every important class confrontation, whether it is at the theoretical or political level, R. Luxemburg and Lenin find themselves on the same side of the barricade despite their disagreements: in the struggle against opportunism and for the defense of proletarian internationalism (against Bernstein and at the Stuttgart Congress in 1907) within the 2<sup>nd</sup> International as well as faced with the break-out of the war and the death of the International in 1914; or still at the time of the Russian

Revolution which she saluted and supported **before** voicing her criticisms. It is only on the basis of this class unity between both personalities and their respective currents that we can understand how the lessons of *Junius* were announcing the 1917 Russian experience: « *war against war* » she issued in *Junius* which only means the proletariat's , with the invaluable contribution of its political party, massive confrontations against the States and governments, workers insurrection, destruction of the bourgeois State and exercise of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

We cannot recount here all the interventions during the debate which followed. Most of them focused on the fight for or against Luxemburg-Lenin's unity. CS and others rebelled against it up to quoting Rosa Luxemburg – out of context – who would have accused "Lenin of being a dictator"; or rather they based themselves on the fact she opposed, at a certain moment, the constitution of the Communist International which, according to CS, was the proof the CI had not been an international (!). Another comrade, former ICC member, came up to speculate about what she would have said if she had not been murdered in January 1919 and had seen the "Bolshevik terror"! In short, the main argument of the "Luxemburgists" being again and again the old democratic refrain and mystification, out of any historical and class consideration, against the workers insurrection and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, against the necessity of the Communist Party. This, as practical consequence, leads them **in the present workers struggles** to act as apologists of the formal democratism of the "Indignados" ["the Indignant ones"] and other "occupy" movements and fall into "assemblyist" and apolitical fetishism.

Many interventions thereafter expressed a similar position to ours: we will particularly remember the ICC delegation's intervention which had been ironic, rightly, about the presentation of the "nice democrat Rosa Luxemburg" against the "nasty dictator Lenin". Those who want to divide both are on the wrong track: what united them was a consequent proletarian internationalism. Finally, this intervention that we salute – for once – for its political correctness ended by the affirmation that Rosa Luxemburg was above all a "woman of organization"...precisely what the apostles of "Luxemburgism", councilists and anarchists too, want to ignore and reject so that they can make Rosa Luxemburg a great defender of "democracy"; and so murder her once more.

This is precisely what history and Rosa Luxemburg herself denies very clearly : « *Given the betrayal of the official representations of the Socialist Parties (...), it is a vital necessity for socialism to create a new workers International which takes care of leading and coordinating the revolutionary class struggle led against imperialism in all countries* » (Thesis of the Tasks of Social-Democracy, annexe to the *Junius Pamphlet* and written by Rosa Luxemburg, our emphasis and translation from French version).

RL.

## 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 stultified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba, etc., and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.
- Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.
- All the nationalist ideologies -'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination', etc- whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.
- In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as stalinism and fascism.
- All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist', and 'Communist' parties (now ex-Communists), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists, anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.
- With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.
- In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.
- Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism

has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organised mass action by the proletariat.

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

## OUR ACTIVITY

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

## OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history.

The IGCL thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the Communist League of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the International Workingmen's Association, 1864-72, the Socialist International, 1884-1914, the Communist International, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the German, Dutch and Italian Lefts, and the groups of the Communist Left which had specially developed in the 1970s and 1980s and which were stemming from these fractions