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(Our review is also available in French)

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Call on Support

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

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

The Proletarians Must Respond to Trump and to All Capitalist States

“With Trump, the masks come off”¹. His language is rough, vulgar, rude, insulting, far from the usual subtle diplomatic language. It is a language of war; of trade war; of imperialist war, and of class war. “Does this sound like a remake of the 1920s and 1930s? It does – 100 years later” (*The Guardian*, 17/1/2017)². In hardly a few weeks of presidency, the “unthinkable and unpredictable” Trump has become an active factor of acceleration of the historical situation and basic contradictions of capitalism which have provoked his very election³.

With Trump's election, the American ruling class⁴ engages itself in a march towards generalized war. It is going to relaunch the nuclear arms race and its military and “infrastructure” spending... as in the 1930s. It engages an aggressive diplomacy which points out the genuine enemies: China of course; but even more, and for the first time directly indicated, Germany and the European Union gathered around it. “You [Germans] can build cars for the United States but you'll have to pay 35% taxes on each car entering the United States”⁵. With Trump, the American ruling class has pointed its fingers at its imperialist rival: “You look at the European Union and it's Germany. Basically a vehicle for Germany”.

With Trump's election, it is all the national bourgeoisies, all the rival imperialist powers which are constrained to “consciously” engage in the march towards war. « *The United States president is becoming a danger to the world. It is time for Germany and Europe to prepare their political and economic defences* » (The German newspaper *Der Spiegel*, February 5th).

With Trump's election, the concrete conditions of the massive historical confrontations between the classes which are going to determine the resolution of the alternative *Revolution or War*, are becoming clearer. His anti-immigrant, anti-“Latino”, anti-Muslim,

sexist discourses and insults are true provocations against the proletariat. The American proletarians risk suffering a bloody defeat in the streets if they let themselves be dragged into anti-Trump demonstrations or in “defence of democracy” behind the Left forces and the Democratic Party⁶. The same would be true if they would adhere to the calls for national unity which follow each attack, from the January 2015 attack in Paris to the one committed in a mosque in Quebec on January 29th. For the proletarians, the only mobilization which is worth participating in, including in regards to the march towards war, is the defence of their living and working conditions against the capitalist class and its states. A massive and bloody defeat of the North American proletariat would represent the removal of the first obstacle to the path towards generalized war. Then, objectively, at the international and historical scale, there would only remain the obstacle of the European proletariat. Because, let's be clear, if the North American and European fractions of the international proletariat were to suffer historical defeats, no other fraction of the international proletariat would be in a condition to brandish the flag of proletarian internationalism up to the necessary height to lead to the international working class insurrection and thus to the rejection of capitalism and war.

With Trump's election, the revolutionaries and the most conscious workers must not evade their responsibility: to face the stakes of the situation; to regroup and collectively clarify them; to cry out and convince that there is no way out of the crisis nor out of imperialist war if capitalism is not destroyed; to be able to intervene and politically lead the **inescapable** class struggles.

With Trump's election, with what his person signifies and announces, the clear and resolute struggle for the regroupment of the revolutionaries – that is to say for the construction of the class political party, the Communist Party – becomes an urgency.

RL, February 16th 2017.

1 Editorial of the *Monde Diplomatique*, February 2017, Serge Halimi. <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2017/02/HALIMI/57131>.

2 . <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/17/trump-merkel-europe-brexit-putin-nato>.

3 We refer our readers to our communiqués in this issue on Trump's election and the Berlin attack.

4 The facts that some of his most provocative declarations can be withdrawn under the pressure of the American state apparatus and sectors of the ruling class, and that his language can adopt a more diplomatic tone, does not change the fact he has made “the masks come off” and that the situation won't backtrack, even if the US bourgeoisie ends up getting rid of him one way or another the way they did with Nixon or Kennedy.

5 Trump's interview with the British newspaper, *Times*, and the German newspaper, *Bild Zeitung*, January 16th 2017.

6 We already can see this taking shape with the ability of the Mexican bourgeoisie to utilize Trump's provocations, the construction of the wall at the frontier, to derail the violent popular anger after the rise of the gas prices late January 1st, with the organisation of a nationalist and “anti-gringo” demonstration on February 12th.

International Situation

The following are communiqués that we produced after Trump's election and the Berlin attack (as well as the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Turkey). Our communiqués are followed by the statements of the comrades of the Internationalist Communist Tendency. Our respective positions are undoubtedly on the same side of the class barricade faced with major and significant events of the reality of the present historical situation. Such events were unthinkable a few years ago; at least before 2015. And the fact that the ICT and our group (and also the PCI-The Proletarian – <http://www.pcint.org> – to a lesser degree) come together to underline and denounce that “the American elections show once more that the choice of “Socialism or barbarism” is more current than ever” (ICT) manifests, apart from a defence of the class positions and principles such as proletarian internationalism, the convergent perception of the stakes of the actual historical situation and where this tends to lead us if the revolutionary proletariat does not succeed to more widely, resolutely and frontally confront capitalism and, ultimately, destroy it. While the reader may notice that the “analytical” approaches of each event are not the same, we don't think that they are opposed or contradictory. They appear to be even complementary and convergent according to us. The difference of approach and “method”, above all marked by the notion of “historical course”, means that our group (and partly also the PCI-Proletarian) assesses that the present events are the mark of a much more affirmed tendency “of the march towards generalized war” while the ICT analyses more the events in themselves and remains more reserved in regards to the very process leading to generalized imperialist war. It is in that sense that our statements are complementary while the respective arguments are not in contradiction.

Communiqué of November 10th 2016

Trump's Election: The Choice of the March Towards Generalized War. Only the Revolutionary Proletariat Can Oppose It.

Shock. Stupor. “*The unthinkable has finally happened*”, the editorialists proclaim this morning. Trump's election, which is just confirmed at the time we are writing, provokes the same reactions in the bourgeois classes of the whole world as those which had followed the Brexit victory, the vote of last June in the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. The French ambassador to the United States has written on Twitter : “*After Brexit and this election, everything is now possible. A world is collapsing before our eyes. A dizziness*”.

This new “unthinkable” is not the expression of a world gone “mad”. It is the expression of the historical pushes towards the generalized war. It is the expression of the capitalist world and its dead-end; of the exacerbation of its insuperable historical contradictions; and of the growing difficulties of the different national bourgeoisies to confront these contradictions, starting with the most experienced ruling class in the world, that is the British one with the Brexit, and now the most powerful, the American one. The end of the classical bipartisan government

alternation and the rise of the extreme right-wing in the main European countries, as well as the bloody attacks that have occurred since 2015, in France and Belgium particularly, announce still new “unthinkables”. The economic dead-end, above all since 2008, and the exacerbation of the trade and imperialist rivalries and wars that the former causes, precipitate the political upheavals and divisions within the bourgeois classes of the main imperialist powers.

The choice of the Military Path

The “unthinkable” election of Trump means that one fraction of the American bourgeoisie has overridden another one. The part of the American bourgeoisie represented by Trump sees that the imperialist and warlike policies put forward by Obama have not stopped the decline of the American imperialist influence in the world. The right wing of the US bourgeoisie no longer believes in “classical” economic and imperialist responses to defend US domination. It only believes in the expression of force. This is in contrast to the Clinton option, shared

by a great part of the Republican Party apparatus, which also ardently defends the interests of American imperialism, including by war. Though she was “interventionist”, though she had voted for the war in Iraq at the time, though she is openly hostile to Russia, no doubt even more than Obama, she did not correspond to the requirements of a part of the American ruling class. During his campaign, the new American President claimed and put forward a series of concrete political orientations : a nationalist and racist ideology ; the questioning of free trades treaties ; the closure of the frontiers ; economic protectionism ; major works that he called for in his 1st speech after the election for rebuilding “*our inner cities and rebuild[ing] our highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools, hospitals. We are going to rebuild our infrastructure...*” (*Washington Post*, Nov. 9th) ; trade war against China ; new orientation towards Russia and NATO in Europe ; reinforcement of the American army. All these orientations and even slogans are the kind of warmongering discourse reminiscent of the speeches of the 1930s.

There are parallels between the “unthinkable” Trump victory and the Brexit. Both events fit in a dynamic of exacerbated imperialist polarization and they mark the assertiveness of an “Anglo-Saxon” imperialist camp opposed to the rest of the world imperialist powers, even if it means sacrificing some particular interests such as those of the finance sector. Similarly, the Brexit jeopardizes the financial City of London. The marked isolationism and protectionism of the President-elect when it comes to international policy of the United States, express this decision of the march towards war. It is going to force continental Europe even more to develop an autonomous military defence. This decision reinforces the US military tensions with China, and emboldens Russia in its willingness to loosen by force the grip that the NATO presence on its borders imposes on it.

As with the Brexit, at the time welcomed by the President-elect, whose electoral victory represents its continuity, the “unthinkable” Trump win means a further step towards generalized imperialist war. Growing misery for the huge majority of the world population as the backdrop, the chain of events, the deadly attacks in Europe, the bloody war in Middle

East, the massive waves of refugees, the political shake-ups; all of this already announced this process driving to generalized war. Trump means that the American bourgeoisie, and as a consequences its imperialist rivals too, makes today the choice to march towards war even more resolutely than the policy led under Obama and defended by Clinton.

For the Working Class Too, the Time of the Choice of its Historical Responsibility

The workers, whether they are in America or not, won't be able to escape the multiplication of the attacks that Trump's election, and the political choice which has just been made, will cause. It is in two ways that the working class will suffer attacks and provocations: as an exploited class, at the level of its living conditions to face the economic dead-end and the requirements of the march towards war; and as a revolutionary class, at the political and ideological level because it is the only force which can oppose the march towards war as it is the bearer of capitalism's destruction and the coming of communism, a society without exploitation, without class, without states, nor war, nor misery.

This is why the response to this march towards war begins with the working class resistance to all the economic and political attacks against its living conditions, through the rejection of nationalism, of national unity, of the defence of the bourgeois democratic state; in short through its opposition and its rejection too of the war. **But for this fight to be at all efficient** at the immediate level of the attacks – to force the bourgeois state to limit, indeed withdraw, them – and historically faced with



The new Chinese aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, in China sea

the prospect of the war, the workers have to equip themselves with the fighting weapons, organization and methods for the struggle, which correspond to this revolutionary future: that is the political confrontation against all the political, union, media, police and justice, forces of the capitalist state – including against the political forces of the Left and extreme Left which claim to act on its behalf but which actually sabotage its historical fight by

bringing it back on the “democratic” terrain of the bourgeois elections and the defence of the “people” and the nation.

Given the seriousness of the moment and the stakes, the minorities of workers already conscious and armed with the revolutionary perspective of communism must come to the vanguard of this historical fight by regrouping themselves in the working class struggles to lead them but also, crucially, by coming closer to the revolutionary and communist groups.

The clear understanding of the historical stakes and the Communist Program which is carried by the communist groups is indispensable for leading this struggle efficiently until the opening of the revolutionary perspective. This is why we call on all those who carry this communist consciousness and who want to engage in the revolutionary fight, to regroup around the groups of the Communist Left, as weak and dispersed as they may be, and to side with them in the struggle for the setting up of the indispensable international communist party of tomorrow.

The IGCL, November 9th 2016.

Statement of the Internationalist Communist Tendency

US Elections: a Surprise, Yes, But Not Completely Unexpected (ICT)

The arrogant Trump beat the repellent Clinton. The populist of the far-right beat the right-wing technocrat disguised as a progressive leftist. Speaking to the belly and the fear of the American electorate got the better of a cultured representative of the establishment. Populism has triumphed in the stronghold of world capitalism even bettering the other successes of the far right; as in Western Europe (in France, Scandinavia, Austria and, in part, in Germany), in Eastern Europe, such as Hungary and Poland, not to speak of Putin's Russia, Turkey's Erdogan and Duterte in the Philippines. We should also mention the Northern League in Italy and Brexit in the UK.

Is everything normal then? Yes, but only partially, if you don't take into account some specific aspects of the American electoral experience. The first of which is the economic crisis. Just as they were wrong about polls which gave Clinton a comfortable victory, the analysts fraudulently lied about the alleged US recovery. Despite trillions of dollars spent by the State in favour of the banks and the less-trumpeted support for the pillars of industry, the US economy has remained below par. Production in heavy industry, including steel, is still stagnant. For decades foreign trade has been a black hole that draws in foreign, especially Chinese, goods. Manufacturing industry is in no better shape. The oil fracking boom has been deflated, after dragging in huge investments and penalising at birth the usual speculation, like a vulture thrown a supposedly tasty sweet only to find it was poisoned.

The increase in GDP has been mainly down to the supremacy of the dollar, financial manoeuvres and

government accounting. There has been an increase in employment but it is minimal, and if you look at how the numbers are compiled you see the usual "fake" statistics, where people who work one week in any quarter appear as employed. Rather than an increase in employment, they should talk of rising underemployment; as they do in the rest of the world. The reality is that US unemployment is at least twice the stated amount. Wages are at historic lows and the speed of production, like the working day, has increased in intensity and duration. Wealth distribution has reached greater depths of inequality than ever before. Out of a population of 320 million inhabitants almost 50 million live below the poverty line. Infant mortality has increased and access to much-publicised health for all has remained a mirage.

In recent years significant segments of the middle class and petty bourgeoisie found themselves in a poverty equal to the proletarian army that do not have jobs anymore, or if they are in employment, it is precarious with derisory wages. When Trump took on the issue, he blamed the previous administration's inconsistency making the Democratic Party responsible for what happened to workers in heavy industry. This allowed him to grab the votes of many of the workers in the Midwest.

In addition to the white working class jobs crisis the once stellar profits of manufacturing companies in Virginia, North Carolina, in the "rust belt" of the Mid West, was an easy target for Trump, as the mortified miners, or rather ex-miners of West Virginia, remained without work due to the "green" policy of another Clinton, the former president, who opted for

the elimination of certain fossil fuels (coal) in favour of the oil lobby. This allowed Trump to attract a significant section of the world of work, constituted by the petty bourgeoisie in the process of proletarianisation, as much of the white working class, dissatisfied with the previous Democratic administration – as well as the old political system in general – without alternatives and without an anti-capitalist class perspective, it has fallen into the net of Trumpian populism. This network also dragged in many young people, short on hope and "rich" in unfulfilled expectations.

Next, of course, come the traditional right linked to racism (it seems that in North Carolina the Ku Klux Klan prevented many blacks from voting), the right to bear arms, to "do it yourself" justice and against immigration which would contaminate the white race "endangering" and "stealing" their already scarce jobs. In conclusion, Trump portrays himself as a champion of the "old American spirit," the man from heaven (not of millions of stars, but of millions of dollars) who will remake America, bigger and more powerful than before. He will give work to everyone, will have a policy for the poor, will preserve the identity of white Americans and put up a barrier to immigration and then, there will be more guns for everyone. So much for domestic policy. For foreign

policy the slogans are isolationism, protectionism and "we'll do our own thing." The third slogan, of course, is the cornerstone and includes and supports the first two.

While in living rooms all over the world they are weeping for poor Hillary's shipwreck, the crisis continues to disrupt the old political order (see Brexit), producing an increasingly unstable "political government of the world", because it is based on an economic structure that is continuously faltering. It is not difficult to predict that social tensions will continue to rise along with poverty and social inequality.

The American elections show once more that the choice of "Socialism or barbarism" is more current than ever, although it is the second alternative, which for now, that is advancing.

The tragedy of our time is the decline of the proletariat, intoxicated by the poisonous fumes of the most aggressive forms of bourgeois and reactionary ideology. It is the almost inert victim of the economic and social attacks that the bourgeoisie has been unleashing for decades against us. Equally tragic is the absence of communist nuclei that can pull the strong discontent within the class together, but we would be fools if we stopped working to create them.

FD (*Battaglia Comunista*)

Public Meeting Saturday March 5th 2017 in Montreal:

1.30 pm at the 2nd floor of the Provigo, 2925 Rachel Est (Métro Préfontaine)

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

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

Pamphlets of 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)

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

Communiqué of December 20th 2016

After the Berlin Attack, the Russian Ambassador's Murder and the Aleppo Massacres:

Where Does the Capitalist World Go To? And Where Does It Want to Precipitate Us?

Slughters, massacres, and terror in Berlin and in Syria, the assassination of the Russian Ambassador in Turkey, these are the most recent acts⁷ of war that strike the world. They multiply since the attacks in Paris of January 2015 and the extension of wars in the Middle East, in Iraq, Syria, but also in Yemen. The Berlin attack directly hits German capitalism and it means that the German ruling class, in turn, is going to adapt more resolutely its whole state apparatus and its national capital to the new situation. Since the attacks in France, it is no longer only the populations of countries of capitalism's historical periphery which are directly and systematically struck, but also the ones of the main powers of the capitalist world, namely America and Europe, that is to say essentially large masses of proletarians.

The proletarians must not allow themselves to be fooled by the discourse of national unity, of the struggle against terrorism and the defense of democracy and our "way of life", lest they risk being dragged onto the terrain of imperialist war behind their bourgeois democratic state. These discourses will intensify this very day, particularly in Germany. Already, the "Ich Bin Ein Berliner" has been launched by all the media after the "Je suis Charlie", "Brussels" or "Nice". No illusion: the outcome would not be less war but more war; and above all, it would open directly the path towards generalized war in which crisis-ridden capitalism attempts to involve the whole of society.

To these events we must add the political upheavals that are occurring in the state apparatuses of the main imperialist powers: the Brexit referendum and Trump's election to be sure, but also the end of the bipartisan system of governing in Western Europe (the alternation between mainstream center-left and center-right parties), the emergence of new forces – often called "populist" – with a new political language that is more aggressive, nationalist, racist... and which is contributing to a climate of war. All

⁷ . The list of the attacks is long. The same day, a shooting occurred against an Islamic centre in Switzerland with 5 dead and the day before a murderous attacks in Jordan caused eight deaths around the city of Karak ...

these facts, acts of war and political shake-ups, are ultimately the result of the inability of capital to overcome the immediate effects of the 2008 crisis and to "revive" the economy. The crisis now exerts such a pressure that it forces the different state apparatuses to adapt their political system to the new situation; including through the renewal of the political personnel freed from the old talking points of before 2015. It also forces the bourgeois classes of each country to intensify even more their economic, political and ideological attacks against the proletarians and their living and working conditions.

For the latter, the sacrifices caused by the preparation of the imperialist war can be added to the sacrifices tied to the economic crisis which has been ongoing for decades. Because who is going to pay for the increase in the size of the U.S. Navy from some 275 ships to about 350 announced by Trump? For the construction of three new aircraft carriers? Who is going to pay for the increase of the German defense budget from 1 to 2% of the GDP ? Who is going to pay for the French military expenses which are set to exceed the Russian military budget in 2017⁸ ? Everywhere, in Europe, in Asia... the military budgets are increasing when they are not ballooning like they are in China or Saudi Arabia, provoking in response their direct rivals to boost their own expenditure. Who is going to pay and who is already paying? In great part, if not exclusively, the international proletariat. And who is going to sacrifice their lives? Trump "*would need to demonstrate why this is a top national priority* [to push back China], *and why ultimately Americans might be called to sacrifice their lives for it*" (*Asian Times*, Harry Kazianis, Dec. 10th 2016). The outcome of all this is beyond any doubt if the international proletariat does not respond by rejecting any national unity, and through the development of its own class

⁸ . The French weekly journal *Le Point*, Budget militaire : la France dépensera plus que la Russie en 2017, 12 décembre 2016 (http://www.lepoint.fr/monde/budget-militaire-la-france-dépensera-plus-que-la-russie-en-2017--12-12-2016-2089696_24.php#xtmc=budget-militaire-2017&xtnp=1&xtrc=1).

fight as well as, ultimately, through the destruction of capitalism which bears generalized misery and generalized war.

Many among the revolutionaries, in mails or meetings, think we exaggerate the danger of the situation when we evoke the fact that the bourgeoisie is today forced to take the path towards generalized war – by attributing to us the idea that war would be inescapable and is likely to start tomorrow morning, thereby conflating process with accomplished fact. They see in it a supposed postulate of the communist groups which remained faithful to the Marxist theory and which would predict at all times and in all places the threat of war and of capitalist catastrophe. For some even, nothing important is now changing in the situation and we have been fooled by the media campaigns. Faced with current facts, this criticism hardly hides the fear of the present and the yearning for the “return to before 2015”. It also expresses the

refusal to glimpse the abyss which is opening up before our eyes. Worse still, it reveals a refusal of the responsibility to draw all the political consequences; starting with the militant commitment and our responsibilities in the fight for the regroupment of communists, today dispersed and isolated, into a Party which will be the political vanguard of the historical fight of the proletariat as exploited and revolutionary class.

The logic of the capitalist system is driving towards a generalized war which would impact all of humanity. Will this be the outcome? **Proletarian revolution or generalized imperialist war, Socialism or Barbarism**, such are the stakes of the historical confrontation between the classes that the bourgeoisie is forced today to provoke against the international proletariat.

The International Group of the Communist Left,
December 20th 2016.

Statement of the Internationalist Communist Tendency

Some Quick Observations on the Events in Berlin

Isis has claimed responsibility for the attack in Berlin. The police are still searching for those responsible. But whatever they find, the scenario of war and terror that has existed for years now will continue to wreak havoc on a capitalist society facing a crisis of profitability and political identity.

“Redouble your efforts, the Crusaders have struck: Americans, Europeans, Turkish traitors, Russian Communists, Arab tyrants.”

This was the last message transmitted by Radio Mosul about two weeks before Aleppo fell into the hands of the Assad militias, following the onslaught of the Russian bombings. It was a sort of last, desperate “call to arms” to sleeper cells in the West to make the ultimate sacrifice for the Caliphate. The Isis spokesman also indicated the way the attacks should be organised, threatening: “You will remember these words”, and so it was.

The first question is: Has Western imperialism treated Arab nationalism so badly that it has provoked such intense hatred? Yes. Not to go too far back, between 2003 and 2011 the US, Britain and France have battered Libya, Syria and Iraq. Under the pretext of exporting democracy they have attempted to undermine the old dictatorial equilibrium to impose their economic and energy agendas, displacing whole populations, promoting bloody civil wars, creating hundreds of thousands of

deaths and millions of totally desperate refugees who are attempting to flee to find shelter in the countries that have been the cause of their despair.

The second is: How did ISIS arise and what does it represent in the Middle Eastern scenario? ISIS is a response to the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. It is the nationalist Sunni response to pro-Western Shiite governments. The same imperialism which inadvertently triggered the birth of ISIS then used, financed and armed it as part of the imperialist conflict in Syria (USA-Russia but not only them) and then walked off and turned against it when it came to be seen as an inappropriate instrument – politically cumbersome and strategically negative.

The third: Why are there so many attacks against the West right now, as with the killing of the Russian ambassador in Ankara, Berlin, Zurich and a few days ago in Jordan? The answer lies in the war. At the moment the Russian-Turkish-Iranian axis seems to have control of the situation against the US and its allies.

USA/Saudi Arabia & Company. (Do not be misled by the weirdness and contradictions of the two coalitions. Both are temporary, instrumental alliances and can change at any time, as they already have). Russia is fighting ISIS just to have an excuse to crush all opponents of its ally Assad; Turkey, after an endless series of U-turns is allying itself with Russia

in order to restore the lucrative Turkish Stream pipeline project and to gain possession (control) of the Kurdish Syrian area on its south-eastern border. Iran is seizing the opportunity to exercise its religious influence in the area, in reality political and therefore economic/oil interests, which extend from the Iraq border to the shores of the Mediterranean by taking advantage of Shiite support in the shape of the Lebanese Hezbollah. All of them are against ISIS but each of them has their own particular interests which oblige them to get rid of any inconvenient obstacles that they may have helped to create. And we are in the end-game. Al Baghdadi's project of creating the new Caliphate is shipwrecked: over this last year three-quarters of the conquered territories have been lost with only one stronghold city – Raqqa – remaining but which, however, is going to be recaptured. The terrorist incidents of recent days need to be seen within this framework.

In Jordan we have seen punishment doled out for the Hussein monarchy's support of the pro-USA Coalition. In Zurich, provided the episode in question is confirmed as terrorism of Islamic origin, we have witnessed an attack on one of the centres of Western financial capital. The assassination of the Russian ambassador in Ankara sounds like the revenge of an isolated "individual", either Islamist and "lone wolf" or someone sent by Gulen (alleged organiser of July's failed coup in Turkey), but these speculations are of little significance. The main point is that the places affected are the enemies of ISIS. Russia, in particular, is guilty of having bombed the jihadi opposition in Syria, and has conquered their Aleppo stronghold in support of the Shiite-backed Assad, the sworn enemy of al Baghdadi.

The Berlin atrocity may turn out to be yet another blow against a European nation belonging to the Western bloc which, although not at the forefront of the fight against jihadism, is part of the US Coalition "of the willing". Berlin was also "open" to receiving refugees. In the mind set of the black Caliph's followers, this is seen as aid to people who have run away from their responsibilities as good Muslims. They should have stayed and fought for the establishment of the Caliphate. In other words, these latest attacks are a response to the political and military defeat which ISIS is facing. They are art of a desperate attempt to make a mark on an international scale, in order to say to Sunni Muslims, "we are still alive after all and can go on fighting".

The fourth question concerns both the short-term and long-term prospects. What are the immediate consequences of these attacks? The probable answer is that there will be more of this kind of asymmetric warfare in the tragic wake of Berlin and elsewhere.

As we reported at the beginning of the article, ISIS spokesman have indicated that they will strike with all means possible against their internal and external enemies so that they too fall into the hell that has been created. It doesn't matter if civilians, are affected as long as "the symbols of the Christian West, its way of life and the symbols of its decadence" are hit. Such anathemas that leave civilians dead on the pavements are somehow supposed to "compensate" for the Arab casualties, also civilian and in vastly greater numbers, who have remained under the bombs and the rubble of Aleppo. But the anathemas that pile victim upon victim, like the anxious concern of the European people affected by the attacks, take no account of the fact that this clash is a totally inter-imperialist one between two politically opposed blocs, with different economic and strategic objectives, but where both have made war and carried out massacres (collateral damage!) with no holds barred.

It is the crisis of the capitalist system that is pulling the strings in this encounter. The devastating economic crisis continues to provoke terrible massacre of entire populations and innocent civilians, with or without the spectre of ISIS and its deadly backlash. And if that was not enough, it gives racists and reactionaries of the Right (but not just them) the chance to play their xenophobic cards in elections, deliberately confusing terrorism with the desperate migration of millions of the dispossessed, that they themselves have helped to create. While on the battlefields of Syria and Iraq – but we could add in Yemen, Libya and sub-Saharan Africa, just to stay within the close geo-political area – hundreds of thousands of workers, the dispossessed, are victims of Western imperialism and the victims of the ambitions of their respective ruling classes. Wage slaves in peacetime, cannon fodder in wartime, they are always subject to the interests of capital, its brutal laws, its explosive contradictions, under whatever management, private or state, secular or religious. These attacks are the perverse consequence of wars fought in other areas. The wars themselves are the poisoned fruit of the economic crisis. The crisis is the "natural" consequence of how wealth is produced and distributed within any single nation, across the world's geo-economic areas. All this is the child of capitalism. The struggle against the latter is our starting point as we grope to regroup against a social disaster whose viciousness and ferocity offers no escape, other than war, imperialism, economic crisis, "biblical" migrations and terrorist attacks. All of them are destined to increase and expand in the time and political spaces that still remain.

FD (*Battaglia Comunista*)

Response to the Criticisms to our Communiqués on the Brexit Victory in Great Britain and Trump's Election in the United States

This contribution was written just a few days after Trump's presidential election and the publication of our communiqué dated November 9th. [Trump's Election : The Choice of the March Towards Generalized War...](#) . It is part of a discussion we had within our group after questions were raised among us and after receiving criticisms that sympathizers promptly sent by mail. Afterwards, we also received critical comments from political groups and comrades who basically take up the same arguments which we respond to here. Since then, all of the comrades of our group had agreed in general with the points put forward by the following internal contribution. Thus we submit it now for the benefit and the reflection of all comrades and communist groups even though some specific arguments may be dated since the time of writing.

We precede it with a quotation by K. Marx on “circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part”. He wrote this about Napoleon III in the 1869 Preface of the 2nd edition of his book *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

K. Marx on Napoleon 3rd

“Driven by the contradictory demands of his situation, and being at the same time, like a juggler, under the necessity of keeping the public gaze on himself, as Napoleon's successor, by springing constant surprises – that is to say, under the necessity of arranging a coup d'état in miniature every day – Bonaparte throws the whole bourgeois economy into confusion, violates everything that seemed inviolable to the Revolution of 1848, makes some tolerant of revolution and makes others lust for it, and produces anarchy in the name of order, while at the same time stripping the entire state machinery of its halo, profaning it and making it at once loathsome and ridiculous.”

K. Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of L.N. Bonaparte*, 1851

What are the main criticisms to our political statement? Let's take the comrades S. and J.'s mails:

- «*I don't think we can infer from Trump's victory a collective decision on the part of the bourgeoisie. It is a populist backlash and the victory of dog-whistle politics, made possible by widespread disillusionment among US electorate* » (S.):

- «*The victory of Trump is evidence that the traditional ruling class (from which he comes) is losing its grip* » (J.) ;

- «*This has the effect of mounting attacks on the working class on the domestic front and increasingly aggressive nationalism on the international front. Trump in this respect was no different from Clinton* » (J.).

Let's sum up: Trump's election is due to a petty-bourgeois backlash uncontrolled by the ruling class; his election is not a “conscious” collective decision of the bourgeoisie as a whole; the bourgeoisie is losing control of the situation, in particular at the level of its political game, thus its state power; there

was not any genuine stake for the bourgeoisie in this election between Trump and Clinton from the point of view of the American state policy and the ruling class.

1) A Pettybourgeois Backlash?

The capitalist contradictions manifest themselves today **concretely** through the increasing pressure to prepare for war and, at the same time, to engage and provoke massive confrontations with the proletariat; and all this with the backdrop of an economic dead-end which lasts for decades and has clearly been exposed since 2008. These antagonisms exacerbate themselves and provoke a vast number of upheavals at all levels of the life of capitalism, economic, imperialist, political, social, ideological, etc. which are openly blowing up since 2015. It is at all levels that the bourgeoisie must adapt itself to be able to respond to the requirements of the situation, in particular at the level of its state apparatus. Amongst other things, it has to find and put in place the political staff and personalities who correspond to this new situation; that is to say, those who are not too marked by, nor captive to, schemas of

understanding and ways of thinking belonging to “before”, in particular before January 2015 (to simplify of course).

Amongst these political personalities and forces that tend to correspond to the change of language and to the belligerent ideological atmosphere that the bourgeoisie wants to impose, the extreme right forces, now called “populist”, are particularly well adapted. Their generalized development today is not based on a series of historical and bloody defeats of the proletariat as in the 1930s – as such they are not fascist phenomena or tendencies – but on the fact that their discourse corresponds to the deep historical pushes towards war. Their present development is not the product of a petty bourgeois reaction as the bourgeois media preach and as is claimed by numerous revolutionaries, but of the necessities of capitalism which is caught in insuperable and increasingly exacerbated contradictions. Evidently, this development of the extreme right bases itself on, and feeds off, the growing and destructive petty bourgeois frustrations which are real (even more so since the proletarian revolutionary perspective is largely absent). Is there any need to remind that the same was true with the rise of the Nazis in Germany and Blackshirts in Italy? They were not petty bourgeois reactions imposing themselves upon capitalism and its state but it was capital which leaned on these feelings – racist, xenophobic, misogynistic, etc. – to have an armed wing at its disposal against the revolution, and later for war.

“The fascist movement must be understood as the attempt to politically unify the conflicting interests of various bourgeois groups under the banner of counter-revolution. Fascism, created and directly fostered by the entire upper classes (landowners, industrialists, commercial sectors, bankers, supported by the traditional State apparatus, the monarchy, the Church, and masonry) pursued this aim by mobilising elements within the disintegrating middle classes [the French version says “in disarray” instead of “disintegrating”] which, in close alliance with the bourgeoisie as a whole, it has managed to deploy against the proletariat.(...) Directly favoured in this period by governments, the bureaucracy, the police, judiciary, army etc., Fascism has since gone on to completely replace the bourgeoisie's old political personnel » (Draft theses for the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Italy presented by the Left, 1926, we underline).

The “uncontrolled petty bourgeois reaction” and the so-called danger of “populism” is thus a thesis that the revolutionaries and the proletarians must reject. There is no doubt that the media's emphasis on the

phenomenon of “populism” has penetrated into the revolutionary camp – we are not surprised – but it is more surprising that it has found its way also into the Communist Left, because the latter is already armed to face it. One has only to read the ICC articles on this question⁹. The ruling class is going to attempt to take advantage of any political confusion or weakness on this point to try to lead the maximum number of proletarians to the defence of “reason”, of the state and the democratic nations, by calling on the “people” to rally behind it at the detriment of the defence of the proletarians’ own economic and political class interests; that is to say, at the detriment of the struggle against the immediate and historical effects of the capitalist crisis, whatever are the government teams in power, and for the development of the revolutionary perspective. This trap is ceaselessly renewed under one form or another since the anti-fascism of the 1930s. It is based on the idea that the ruling class, as a function of the circumstances and the particular countries in question, or particular fractions of the national bourgeoisies, is losing control of the situation.

2) Is the Bourgeoisie Losing Control of the Situation?

Our statement on Trump is in continuity with the communiqué that we had published after the Brexit referendum: [*After the Brexit Victory, The Capitalist Contradictions Explode at all Levels...*](#). For many, starting with the bourgeois media, the Brexit was a mistake of the bourgeoisie which did not succeed in managing its political game. And it would be the same with Trump. If such were the case, if the American and English bourgeoisies were weak enough to lose their grips and, in particular, not to manage at a minimum their political game in regards to important decision such as the Brexit or the choice of a new president – with two chambers, the Senate and the House of Representatives, in the hands of the Republican Party – then the immediate situation would be quite different and much more fragile and difficult for the bourgeoisie. Believing that both cases are manifestations of simple losses of control by the ruling class does not explain why these phenomena arise and repeat themselves precisely today. For our part, we try to give an analysis and an explanation.

9 . See : “ *The rise of populism is dangerous for the ruling class because it threatens its ability to control its own political apparatus and at the same time maintain the democratic mystification which is one of the pillars of its social domination* ” (International Review #157, <http://en.internationalism.org/international-review/201608/14087/brexit-trump-setbacks-ruling-class-nothing-good-proletariat>).

Since here we are not talking of just any ruling class. We don't refer to the Venezuelan bourgeoisie or that of one economically backwards African country. It is about the most experienced one in the world, the British one, and the most powerful, the American one. Again both ruling classes go together – let's recall, for instance, Thatcher opening the path to Reagan and the international and historical consequences of this choice. To think that they would no longer manage the exercise of their class power up to the point of letting petty bourgeois reactions take over and jeopardize their interests with no response would mean that the ruling class and **its state power** are highly fragile. Certainly, from an historical point of view, that is in relation to the historical alternative **Revolution or War such as it arises concretely today**, the bourgeoisie is far from being all-powerful. But from an immediate point of view, the requirements of capital in crisis push for a reinforcement, each time more absolute, more totalitarian, of the bourgeois state with, moreover, an international proletariat which is to date far, very far, from arising and responding to the stakes of the situation – without mentioning the specific historical weaknesses of the proletariat of North America.

Thus, without denying that there are divergent economic and political interests between bourgeois fractions, it seems to us that we must reject the thesis according to which the bourgeoisie would “lose its grips” or would no longer control the political machinery of its state apparatus, particularly in the United States and in Great Britain. For our part, we explain both phenomena, Brexit and Trump – which are one in a certain sense – by the exacerbation of capitalism's contradictions as they concretely manifest and impose themselves upon the national ruling classes since 2008, and by the inability of capital to overcome at a minimum level the consequences of the most recent open crisis in contrast to the previous ones. The acuteness of these contradictions forces the ruling classes to turn towards such or such path. Here to engage in a “more resolute” march towards war because the economic responses prove to be increasingly ineffective, including at the immediate level, despite their extent which challenges any “capitalist economic logic”...

3) The Conscious Acts of the Bourgeoisie?

“I don't think that this is the result of a conscious decision on the part of the ruling class” writes one of our correspondents. When the ruling classes take decisions which are imposed on them by the course of history and more particularly by the diktats of

capitalism in crisis, to what extent are they conscious of what they do? Behind this question also lies the wrong criticism made of Marxist theory and analysis which accuses it of having a supposedly conspiratorial vision.

“The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. (...) The division of labour, which we already saw above as one of the chief forces of history up till now, manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labour, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves. Within this class this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts, which, however, in the case of a practical collision, in which the class itself is endangered, automatically comes to nothing...” (K. Marx, *The German Ideology*,

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01b.htm#b2>).

What and how, to what extent, can the bourgeoisie be conscious of the choices it makes such as the Brexit and Trump? It is clear that it was divided on these two decisions and that it certainly hesitated. As also, there has been a genuine battle between at least two fractions of the ruling class and within the state apparatus. Trump's election, as well as the Brexit, is not the result of an established plan or a plot – even though it happens that the bourgeoisie, and particularly the American one, sets up plots and plans. **The process of decision making within the ruling class is also a contradictory process.** Once in power, the Nazis physically eliminated several fractions of the bourgeoisie. They nevertheless represented at one moment the interests of German capitalism and the ruling class as a whole.

We must not understand the decisions or important choices of the bourgeoisie as an expression of “total” consciousness – only the proletariat is the bearer of a “scientific” consciousness because it brings in itself the suppression of all classes. When it takes decisions, the bourgeoisie's consciousness is like the consciousness of a surfer who catches the wave, or not, and who tries to stay up on the surfboard. The surfer is conscious of what he does but he does not command to the wave, nor necessarily does he know the mechanism of the tides.

A fraction of the ruling class has seen a good wave coming and has been able to catch it while the other let it pass. Nothing being automatic, nor linear, we can't exclude in the absolute that Trump ends up falling of his surfboard. But for now, he has just come to raise himself on it. The “Brexiters” yesterday, the “Trumpists” today, have represented and expressed at a given moment the step it mattered to take more clearly and decisively than the other fractions of the political apparatus – in this case the political personnel formed and marked by the previous period. But on the basic orientation, actually “*Trump in this respect was no different from Clinton*”. On this point, we all agree but it is insufficient for understanding the events and their dynamic as well as for our intervention.

4) What Stake in These Elections for the American Bourgeoisie?

In the case of Brexit as in Trump's case, the English and American bourgeoisies are united on the basic orientations of which both choices are moments. Clinton was no less a warmonger than Trump (and in the short term, maybe more so than the isolationist Trump). The possibility that the acute tension existing presently between Russia and the USA calms down with Trump's coming, does not change anything with respect to the basic “warlike” orientation he bears. The Clinton option, shared by the Democratic Party and a great part of the Republicans, **differed on the timing, on the moment**, to set up a more direct orientation for “the march towards war”. It went the same with the Brexit. The British bourgeoisie is united and conscious (who can have a doubt?) on its pro-American imperialist policy, of alliance with the USA. Let's recall Churchill's remark to De Gaulle in which he was saying to him that the United Kingdom would always choose “*the great large of the Atlantic*” if it had to make a choice between France and the United States. This traditional and basic orientation of the UK would have to result, soon or later, in a distancing from and an open opposition to the European Union once... “war was in sight” – not in an immediate manner but as a perspective becoming directly determinant for the decisions of capital. The unique stake on this was the timing, the moment, the occasion, for taking this step.

Whatever is the bourgeoisie's consciousness (that is its understanding of the situation), or the consciousnesses of its different fractions, the Brexit as well as Trump express the fact that **the perspective** of the generalized imperialist war **imposes itself directly**. That **the process which**

drives to it, and without prejudging its term or its speed, determines from now on directly the policies and the orientations of the main imperialist powers, as well as their decisions, in particular the configuration of their state political apparatus and the choice of the government teams. And that it relegates to the background (relatively and as a tendency) the other considerations, economic, social, political, diplomatic, etc. while submitting them to the necessities of **this process towards war**, even if it means sacrificing the interests of some fractions of the bourgeoisie. Thus there are underlying tendencies in both cases which force the bourgeoisie to act and which make their mark on the “decisions”. It is only within the historically weaker ruling classes that the decisions may not to correspond to the deep tendencies and then lead to “national” catastrophe.

In this sense, in regards with the timing, the choice of the moment, “the option Trump was different from the option Clinton”.

5) Trump : A Clarification of the Imperialist Alliances and Dynamics and the Class War

The Brexit and the “unthinkable Trump” will cause a shakeup of the imperialist alignment, an acceleration of the process of imperialist polarization and a worsening of the militarization of the economy and society. Both events – which are actually one – reveal too that the bourgeoisie has well engaged a process leading it to massively, frontally, and violently confront the proletariat. We don't develop these points here.

A last clarification: the needs of the “march towards war”, which brought Trump to power according to us, do not mean that the extreme right, whatever is its form, is automatically going to come to power in the main imperialist powers. For instance, the Brexit shows us that the Tory Party, classical party of the British bourgeoisie, succeeded “in catching the wave” even though it has been difficult. There is a fundamental difference which explains the difficulty of the main European powers in relation to war and their obviously less warlike discourse or language: the experience and the tradition of the European proletariat, in particular with regards to the imperialist war and to nationalism. From this point of view, the American ruling class and even more, for instance, the Russian ruling class have their hands more free to assume war and to bring to power figures such as Putin or Trump. The working class mobilization in France late last spring was a first test and a warning for the European bourgeoisies: despite the state of emergency officially declared to lead “the

war against ISIS and its bloody attacks” and which prohibits any public gatherings and “justifies” massive and violent repression, the proletariat succeeded nevertheless to massively demonstrate for four months and occupy the streets and the squares.

Let's sum up the points of the main disagreements according to us that we should discuss and clarify:

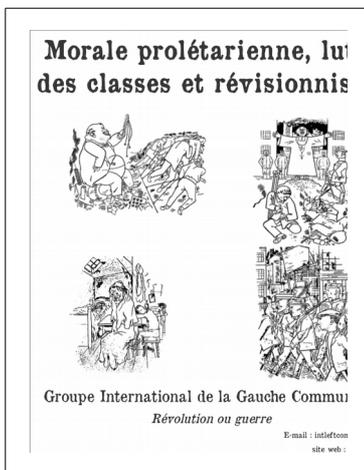
- is the bourgeoisie losing control of the situation or rather is it riding the wave of history and the contradictions of capitalism so that it adapts its policy?

- do the Brexit and Trump phenomena express petty bourgeois backlashes or rather the bourgeoisie's capacity to lean on these strata and on their historically impotent hatred to impose its “solution” to its dead-end ?

These are the terms of the debate we should develop since, according to the response we'll give them, the political implications, in particular for our intervention, won't be the same.

November 12th 2016, Jonas/RL

Proletariat Morality, Class Struggle and Revisionism



« Throughout the history of the workers movement, Marxism underlines how revisionism (...) has introduced the ideological themes of the bourgeoisie (...), the values, the morality, the interests and, in a general way, the bourgeois ideology in the working class movement in the name of “general” science, “abstract” philosophy, “human” morality and interests »

Against the opportunist theories of the International Communist Current of the years 2000...

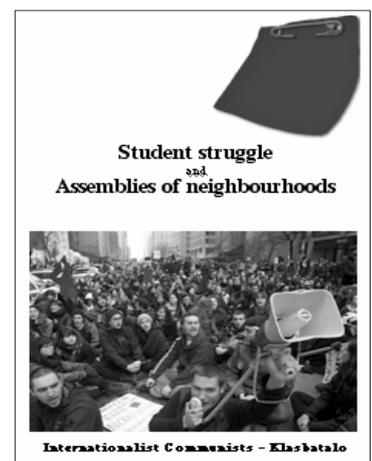
Read our pamphlet in French *Morale prolétarienne, lutte des classes et révisionnisme* !

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)



Working Class Struggles Around the World

*Internationally, the present time is marked by upheavals which affect the political apparatus of the main capitalist nations of the world and the imperialist alliances. The belligerent language accompanying Trump's election and the Brexit are the most obvious expressions. Even though the working class struggles are for the most part silenced by the media, the combativity of the working class and the persistence of its struggles, as limited as they may be, nevertheless remain a reality and the only historical resistance to the course towards generalized war to which capitalism inescapably drives us if it is not finally overthrown. This is the only **realistic** alternative to generalized imperialist war. Hence the "historical" importance – that is beyond their immediate significance – of the present working class struggles.*

United Kingdom: "Millions of Londoners were affected, Monday January 9th, by a new strike in the subway system. It is the last episode of a nightmarish early winter for the British users [Ed: of services] who are confronted by a multitude of social movements. The oldest subterranean network in the world, inaugurated in 1863, was almost wholly paralysed since Sunday night. (...) Several strikes have already taken place since 2014 to denounce the reforms initiated by the former Conservative mayor of London, Boris Johnson. Caught in the conflict, his successor, the Labour Party member Sadiq Khan, has called the strike "totally unnecessary" and has lamented that it "is causing misery to millions of Londoners" (...). This misery could continue into Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday since the Southern Railways employees, the company which links London to the Southeast of England, has called for a new stoppage to protest against the management's willingness to entrust the closing doors of the trains working alone. Thousands of members of the British Airways flight staff must also comply with a social movement Tuesday and Wednesday due to a conflict on the wages of staff contracted since 2010" (French newspaper, *Le Monde*, January 9th 2017).

As we can see with the transport strike that the media can't ignore, it is a whole series of strikes that has taken place in the United Kingdom these last years, particularly in the transportation sector where the number of strikes is up 33% in 2016 in relation to the previous year. But above all, after the December strikes in the subway, the trains, and the Post Office, the week from January 9th to 13th was the occasion of an extension and a dynamic of unification of the struggles which not only could have paralyzed the country, or at least the region around London, but above all represent a

concrete appeal to the outbreak of wider class fights enabling the anticipation of the development of a more favourable relation of forces for the proletariat against capital. Faced with this potentiality, the British unions have known how to break the dynamic under way. While the Southern Rail inspectors were on strike December 18th and 20th, the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers imposed a "Christmas truce" which stopped the movement. At British Airways, the union succeeded in cancelling the strike which was planned while the workers had largely declared themselves (7 to 1) against the wage proposal recommended by the union. At the same time, the Post Office union has been successful in limiting the strikes to some sectors only. There is scarcely any doubt that the crisis, and particularly, the Brexit will impose greater attacks against the

living conditions of the working class. To resist this at all efficiently, the workers in the United Kingdom must oppose the systematic sabotage carried out by the unions and thereby assume the direct political fight against them as well as against the Left (and leftist) forces which support them.

Mexico: at the same time, mass protests against the 20% increase of the gasoline price have provoked riots in at least 15 of the 32 states in the United Mexican States.

In the state of Mexico, a recently adopted law allows the police to fire at demonstrators. In this same state, 430 people were arrested and the police killed several protesters. The union bosses have signed a pact calling on the workers to go back to work and to give up the struggles against the *gasolinazo* and other aspects of their living conditions¹⁰.

USA and Canada : A broad reformist movement of

10 . For more information, see the ICT website : <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2017-01-21/mexico%E2%80%99s-turmoil>



Massive demonstration in Mexico city against the "Gasolinazo"

strikes and demonstrations for a minimum hourly wage of \$15 (10.5 euros) has been launched in 2015 in the USA and 2016 in Canada. In North America, the different minimum wages maintain the workers at poverty line and even lower. Rather than a unified movement between Canada and the USA, the unions want to limit the struggle to the negotiation of separate collective agreements. Moreover, unions like the *Fédération des Travailleurs du Québec* (FTP) sabotage the action by reporting that they have secured a \$15 minimum hourly wage by 2022.

Brazil: On December 1st there were anti-austerity demonstrations and violent confrontations with the police. More than 10 000 demonstrators gathered in front of the Brazilian Parliament to protest against the salary cuts, the reforms of the pension system, and a measure that plans to freeze public spending for the next 20 years. They also attempted to invade the Parliament but the police forces prevented this by firing rubber bullets, and using tear gas and water canons.

Greece: Pensioners demonstrated on November 8th in Athens against new reductions of the pensions imposed by the state in the framework of the austerity measures demanded by the financial backers of Greece. Around 3000 people gathered to the cry of "liars" in front the Labour Ministry in Athens. Then the demonstrators went to the Parliament demanding the return of the "stolen money". Early December, gatherings, demonstrations, strikes and blockades of ports began throughout Greece, notably in Athens, while the Parliament was discussing the 2017 budget and new, still more severe, austerity measures.

South Africa: Early November, the bus drivers led a wildcat strikes in Johannesburg.

Palestine: power failures have provoked a workers' demonstration which has been strongly repressed by the Hamas. The demonstrators went to the electricity company offices singing slogans against the Hamas and Fatah leaders. While these thousands of demonstrators headed towards the electricity company, the Hamas police forces attempted to prevent the demonstrators from assailing the company offices by firing gunshots in the air. While the rich can buy diesel from private producers, the working class in Gaza, where the rate of unemployment is 43% and the average salary two to seven dollars per day, can't afford it.¹¹

11 . See also *Against Israel, Against Palestine – For Class Struggle* <http://www.leftcom.org/en/articles/2002-11-01/against-israel-against-palestine-for-class-struggle>. Voir *Contre Israël et la Palestine – Pour la lutte des classes* <http://www.leftcom.org/fr/articles/2002-11-01/contre-isra%C3%ABl-et-la-palestine-pour-la-lutte-des-classes>

Algeria: Strikes have taken place during November in the education and health sectors and among the state employees. On November 27th, a gathering in front of the National Assembly lasted a short time since the demonstrators were arrested before and during the demonstration. Riots occurred in several cities. Early January, strikes, riots, and demonstrations took place against the high cost of living. Since November, hundreds of workers have been arrested.

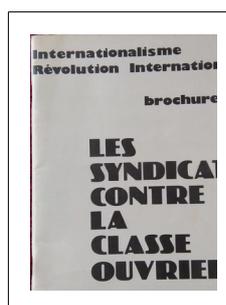
Mauritania: there were clashes between striking dockers and the police in Nouakchott on November 9th.

Bangladesh: Late December, tens of thousands of textile workers demonstrated in the Ashulia fabrication center which produces clothes for Western brands such as GAP, Zara and H&M. The protests began after the dismissal of 121 workers. The number of laid-off could rise to 3500. The demands have grown to a threefold increase of the minimum monthly salary. Around 55 factories have locked out to attempt to limit the demonstrations which turned to clashes when the police fired rubber bullets and wounded ten demonstrators.

China: the number of strikes has increased by 16% in 2016 in relation to 2015. China is a state regime which has never been socialist or communist. This regime is a particularly brutal form of a universal tendency towards state capitalism which belongs to the historical period of capitalism's decline.

January 23th, Normand

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



For our readers from North America, we have reprinted the ICC pamphlet in French *Unions Against the Working Class* in French that it is difficult to find on this continent and which was written in 1976. It is also available in English. For the readers from Europe who could not get it directly from the ICC, they can also write us at our email

intleftcom@gmail.com or still at our Postal address : CP 55045, Centre Maisonneuve, H1W 1B0 Montréal, Canada.

Even though our group, the IGCL, does not necessarily claim all the arguments and positions of this pamphlet, we think it is an historical document which matters to make known by the young generations and which can serve as a "programmatic" reference for today's communist groups.

Is the Working Class Right Wing? (ICT)

The Internationalist Communist Tendency's statement that we reproduce here has the merit of responding to an ideological theme that is ceaselessly repeated: the workers vote for the right wing parties and even for the extreme right wing parties. The famous American "white male blue-collar workers" are supposed to have voted Trump. A similar demographic are said to have voted for the Brexit, or are going to vote for the National Front in France next May. Besides rejecting the conclusions implicit in this affirmation, that is that the working class today is reactionary, nationalist, racist, and thus would not be a revolutionary class any longer, the article also has the virtue of denouncing in a concrete and real way the electoral participation and of defending the communist position, Abstentionism, borne by the Communist Left in the present historical period.

In the 80s and 90s it was fashionable to say that the working class no longer existed. Only the last remnants were left and they were in rapid decline, the final legacy to a bygone era. This process began in the mid 70s with restructuring in the factories, with the progressive and inexorable reduction in jobs under the pitiless pressure of the crisis. Technological innovation – the microprocessor and information technology – accelerated the phenomenon even more, allowing the relocation of the workforce to areas where labour power costs much less and there is not even a pretence of limitations on the dictatorship of the bosses. Every day the mass media and "opinion makers" preached, with a religious zeal inspired directly by their God, the market, the new "truth," a (debatable) truth which implied that the conflict between workers and employers – in short the class struggle – was old fashioned stuff that, perhaps, might have had some meaning back in the nineteenth century, but certainly not in the twentieth century and even less in the new Millennium. The "working" class, both in the narrow sense of "blue collar" workers, as well as those in job sectors that grew considerably in the second half of the last century, have been put, by the sociologists, the above-mentioned "opinion formers" and, not least, by politicians in the all-embracing and reassuring category (for those bourgeois ideologists) of the so-called middle class. A sociological category, which in trying to include everything, says nothing. Its unifying criterion puts very different jobs and incomes in the same category based solely on "job security" and a wage or salary above the poverty threshold. It was, indeed, it is, clear that this concept of middle class includes if not most, certainly a large proportion of "blue collar" workers and those employed in the service industry who if they can (or could) boast a higher standard of living than the lower layers of the working class (from the point of view of income), can only be objectively placed in the "middle class," with great difficulty given the type of job they do and the income they earn.

Like any self-respecting myth, this contains a grain of truth when baldly stated, but when it is thoroughly

distorted by the capitalist opinion makers, and mixed, for good measure, with liberal doses of total invention, it becomes pure "bollocks".

Today, after the election of Trump and the unquestionable electoral advance of the fascist right in Europe (including Italy), there is a strong feeling that the bourgeoisie are building another myth, even though, unfortunately, it is certainly closer to reality than the first.

What do the "experts" of all stripes, from the newspapers and major television networks, to websites and teeming blogs on the net, tell us? That such a populist right, of Nazi-Fascist origin, more or less updated for the third millennium, is voted for by the proletariat, and especially by the former "solid" working class, hit hard by so-called globalisation and deeply worried about the future. This social discontent has its main root in the waves of immigration¹² [1]. The migrants are seen as those who take too great a share of the "welfare state" (health, housing, benefits and even direct subsidies), those with whom you have to share the increasingly feeble crumbs of a welfare – financed by deductions from the payroll and taxation. That the phenomenon exists is beyond doubt and there is no need to analyse election results: just listen to fellow workers talking, when you're in the doctor's waiting room, in the supermarket checkout queue or in any other public place. It's not uncommon to hear someone rattle off the usual inaccurate stereotypes about the alleged privileged lot of migrants, of the danger they bring, of the thieving character of the political class (this is undoubtedly true ...), without which and with the guidance of "real representatives" of the people things would get sorted, the crisis would pass and a future to smile about would return, though not before summary justice had been dealt out to the bloodsucking politicians. Obviously we are dealing with an "analysis" devoid of class vision or appears – if it appears at all – in a very distorted way, shaped by the toxins of bourgeois ideology in its crudest

12 . Whether true, alleged or exaggerated, it does not really matter, we could add (note of the CWO).

form, inhaled in an environment made even more toxic by the lack of an anti-capitalist political reference point.

Those vague references to some sort of angry anti-capitalism – in itself more than legitimate – by growing sectors of the proletariat, have been revived and reshaped in the traditional ways of the fascist right, which, of course, when and if it rises to power, will make sure to put into practice those measures trumpeted on the campaign for the protection of "the people" or the lower social classes. At the same time though they will continue to hit them even harder than before, as the real rulers of capitalism, the bourgeoisie, demand. The politicians are not only part, or becoming part, of the bourgeoisie but belong to its upper layers. Without the tools of Marxist analysis it would be incomprehensible to fully understand why some of those who are hardest hit by the ruthless policies applied worldwide to counter the crisis, "choose" as their representatives billionaires of the Berlusconi or Trump type, entrust their "anti-system" anger to characters like Salvini, who have never done a day's real work in their lives, never had to think about how to make ends meet by the end of the month, but who spend their existence resting their ass on this or that comfortable institutional armchair (city councilors, or as members of the national or European parliaments): people, in short, who are part of the system right down to their fingertips and beyond.

An increasing number of the proletariat and the declassed petty bourgeoisie have gone through a process which tends to reduce them to mere "plebs"¹³. It is, as we said above, a fact, confirmed by the advance of fascist electoral formations even in the old "red" strongholds¹⁴ of European cities. However alongside this phenomenon, there is another one, usually much less emphasised by the mainstream media. It is, simply, the growth of abstention from one side of the Atlantic to the other. This is true for America's Presidential election as well as, just to give a local example, Monfalcone.

13 . The reference is to the lower class of ancient Rome which constituted the majority of the population. It survived, in a dull political indifference, thanks to the free bread donations bestowed by the Emperor, distracted with equally free performances at the circus. They were also used by the state as a tool to prevent the development of anti-regime consciousness and thus to control a potentially dangerous mass, but rendered totally subservient to the existing system of domination. The mass of plebs was maneuvered by this or that (naturally rich) political leader in the last phase of the Republic. It never played an independent political role and, in the end, sympathised with its rulers in the crushing and oppression of slaves and the populations who paid tribute to the Roman state (note of the CWO).

14 . "Red" in the sense of being run by parties of the Social Democratic and Stalinist type of the past (note of the CWO).

The municipal elections of early November took place in this town where both "indigenous" and immigrant workers are numerous. The abstention rate here was close to fifty percent, allowing the council to be dominated by the list of right wing parties: it seems likely, in fact, that at least a significant part of the working class electorate, which previously supported the "left", rightly disappointed by their old "representatives", abandoned them, by refusing to participate in the fraudulent electoral game. Examination of the data in the US Presidential election shows roughly the same thing: "popular" abstentionism was mainly on the "left", thus in a large part working class, in order to punish a candidate, Clinton who has always stood unequivocally, and with a certain arrogance, on the side of the infamous "1%"¹⁵.

The disgust for capitalist society – although expressed in confused and contradictory form – has huge potential for the communist vanguard and is an uneasy factor for the capitalists. As always they are trying to stem growing social discontent with weapons of mass distraction, with false information, to defuse explosive issues – which are only potential so far – but they are building up.

Abstention is a necessary but insufficient first step; if voting is useless, not to vote is not enough, because the bourgeois system is not only not bothered in the slightest by a lower turnout, but can even take advantage of it. If the no-confidence of your disappointment and anger does not convert itself into practical mass action, on an anti-capitalist working class basis – the only attitude to be truly anti-system – either in the workplace or workplaces (for those with "intermittent" jobs), in the streets, in schools, nothing will change. Indeed, the capitalist class and its political expressions (they are called the European Union, national fronts, and so on) can continue undisturbed and put us – the proletariat – in the meat grinder to feed a system that can survive only by butchering us. Every other way, whether "democratic" or "national-populist", is just an ugly, tragic deception.

CB (*Battaglia Comunista*)

15 . See the article published on this site following the election of Trump. leftcom.org (note of the CWO).

Debate within the Proletarian Camp

On Class Consciousness (Part 2)

We publish the second part of the contribution on class consciousness published in the previous issue. During its conference (July 2016), our group had formally stated on the first part and had adopted it. We had no time to formally pronounce on this second part. Nevertheless, all members of the IGCL agree with the general orientation which emerges from it; in particular with the general evaluation of the CWO and ICC pamphlets on Class Consciousness. The CWO pamphlet closes the door to the danger of councilism while the ICC pamphlet opens it. The former works towards the development of the class political struggle for the formation of the Party; the latter, the ICC's, tends to turn its back to the political class fight and to avoid the struggle for the Party.

The CWO and ICC Pamphlets on Class Consciousness

In the first part of this contribution on class consciousness (see previous issue #6), we demonstrated the continuity of Marxism in the form of a chronology of the acquired experience of the revolutionary and communist movement¹⁶. We now come to the discussion of the contemporary expressions of Marxism, that is the present Communist Left.

Thus we'll consider two pamphlets which deal with the question of consciousness: the first *Communist Organization and Class Consciousness*¹⁷ of the International Communist Current and the second, *Class Consciousness and Revolutionnary Organisation*¹⁸ of the Communist Workers Organization, British affiliate of the Internationalist Communist Tendency. The choice of these two pamphlets is a political choice. In fact, we consider these two historical political currents, the ICC-GCF (*Gauche Communiste de France* of the years 1940-1950) current and the ICT-Battaglia Comunista (Partito Comunista Internazionalista) current, as the most complete and advanced expressions of the Communist Program in the present period. Obviously these two currents are not identical. But despite their divergences and slight differences, they share a common political heritage that we'll discuss here. Unfortunately, our choice implies leaving aside for the moment a discussion of other important currents within the Communist Left, for instance the currents which claim Bordigism or Councilism.

Nevertheless, this article is not a full criticism of the two pamphlets. In fact, we'll leave aside several elements of both which have already been tackled in

the first part of our text on consciousness. Thus we'll avoid repetitions. On the other hand, we'll emphasize one question we deliberately kept for this second part, that is the question of the Russian Revolution and the role of the Party in the revolution.

International Communist Current

If the ICC could be considered as one of the clearest expressions of the communist program at the time of the publication of its pamphlet on class consciousness (1979), this is absolutely no longer the case today. We call on our readers to refer to the previous issues of this journal to get informed of the degenerating turn that the ICC took from the early 2000s on.

This means that the ICC, which still formally exists, is no longer capable of bearing the political positions which it once represented. The degeneration of the formal organization means that the historical positions borne by the GCF and the ICC are today carried by militants who are outside or have been excluded from the ICC. For instance, some militants of our organization claim in a critical manner this historical current.

Councilism and Self-Organization

The main weakness which runs through the ICC pamphlet is that it appears to be the result of a compromise within the organization between two diverging tendencies. Indeed, as the ICC itself was the result of the regroupment between the historical "partidist" GCF-*Révolution Internationale* tendency and various post-68 groups with more or less councilist origins, even though they had adopted the RI platform this could only be expressed in a contradictory way in the ICC press. Thus in this pamphlet, the good mixes with the less good in a quite eclectic manner. As the most caricatural

16 . <http://igcl.org/On-Class-Consciousness>.

17 . <http://www.leftcom.org/en/adverts/2014-04-15/our-pamphlets>

18 . <http://www.leftcom.org/en/adverts/2014-04-15/our-pamphlets>

expression of this enduring councilist tradition, this pamphlet claims the slogan of self-organization. On several occasions, the ICC fetishizes the self-organization of the masses. Implicitly, this means that the proletarian masses must organize “by themselves”, that is without the help of the political organization which is thus seen as external to it. So under cover of a formulation which wants to be political, the false separation between the working class and its Party is reintroduced since the latter is considered at best as external to the class, at worst simply as bourgeois. For us the Party is the most politicized part of the class and any organization of the class will be “self-organized”. Thus we reject the fuzzy term of self-organization because it leads to the rejection of the Party and is therefore of the councilist variety.

Another example of these confusions, the ICC quotes one of the theses of the 3rd Conference of the AAUD: *The organisation of councils permits the working class to liberate itself progressively from the yoke of capitalism, and particularly from the yoke of bourgeois ideology. Within them gradually materialises the proletariat’s consciousness of itself and its will to give class consciousness a concrete and real expression*” (Theses presented to the IIIrd Conference of the General Workers Union of Germany – AAUD) in 1920)¹⁹. The confusions which are at the root of the councilist tradition are clearly expressed in this quotation. The narrower revolutionary organs where class consciousness is the most advanced are mixed with the political organs of the whole class, the workers’ councils. To claim that the workers’ councils, by definition heterogeneous, can be the center of the development of class consciousness is politically very dangerous as was, for instance, proven by the 1918 events in Germany when the councils remained in majority social democratic, that is to say with a counter-revolutionary orientation. On the other hand, the organ whose task is to be the core of class consciousness is the class party. The unitary organs of the class, of course organs of struggle, aim to regroup all workers in struggle regardless of their “political opinion” and their individual level of class consciousness. We can say, in a simple way, that the primary criterion is “sociological”. The fact that the workers’ councils are organs for the regroupment and unification of the whole class for the purpose of working class insurrection and the exercise of class dictatorship, does not detract from

this “unitarian” character, nor from their political function as organ of the insurrection, organ of the dictatorship. The other distinct organization is the political organization whose main criterion for membership is adherence to the communist program and the willingness for militant commitment – independently of the sociological situation of each member.

The ICC even drifts towards Anarchism. Indeed, the pamphlet claims that the Party can become a brake for the class struggle. While it is true that a party which betrays its program can become a brake for the class struggle, here the ICC claims that it is a brake by principle: *“Likewise, to give the party the power to embody class consciousness is to prevent the full flowering of that consciousness; it means taking the immediate state of consciousness of the great mass of workers as a fait accompli, making rigid its weaknesses. It does no great service to the proletariat to entrust its revolutionary minority with all the tasks that demand consciousness and determination. On the contrary, this attitude can only encourage submission to the dominant ideology. By acting in this way, revolutionaries turn themselves into an obstacle on the path to revolution”*²⁰. And so, if the Party acts too much like a revolutionary party, it hinders the revolution. Go figure.

Lenin and the Italian Left before the journal *Bilan* of the 1930s

The ICC pamphlet also has some difficulties to take a position on the tradition of the Italian Left. In fact, even though the ICC claims the Italian Left, it marks the starting point of this tradition only with the group in France and Belgium around the journal *Bilan*. Thus the pamphlet dismisses out of hand the whole experience of the Italian Left before *Bilan* under the pretext that it had a substitutionist position on the party.

Let's look at this more precisely. The ICC traces the substitutionist conception to the Socialist tradition of the 2nd International. This conception is supposed to have led Lenin to adopt Kautsky's idea according to which the workers cannot attain class consciousness by themselves but only with the bourgeois Socialist intellectuals' help. Even though the ICC rightly criticizes this particular passage of Lenin's book *What is to be Done?*, it uses it to justify rejecting the whole book as being the bible of substitutionism²¹.

19 . ICC pamphlet, *Communist Organization and Class Consciousness*, ch. Organization and Class Consciousness (http://en.internationalism.org/pamphlets/classconc/2_cconc/orgn).

20 . idem, ch. The heritage of the CI and the reactions to its degeneration (http://en.internationalism.org/pamphlets/cconc/3_heritage_CI).

21 . See the first part of this article in the previous issue in

The pamphlet mentions the same defect in regards to the Italian Left under Bordiga's leadership in the 1920s. And thus, it rejects fundamental texts under the pretext that they focus too much on the Party and that they identify class dictatorship with party dictatorship.

For the ICC, as soon as the Party takes on the political leadership within the class struggle, this is considered as being substitutionist. On the contrary, for us, to take first position in the class struggle and to guide it towards revolutionary aims is not at all substitutionist. Indeed it is one of the fundamental roles of the class party. Genuine substitutionism would not care about raising the proletarians' class consciousness and, instead of taking responsibility for the political leadership of the class, would give to specialists of the revolution the role of making the revolution in place of the class itself. We often can find this kind of conception in the Bordigist documents. For instance: *“For decades we have been reproached for wanting a revolution carried out by those who are unconscious. We could have responded that provided that the revolution sweeps away the mass of horrors created by the bourgeois regime and provided that the terrible encirclement of the productive masses by bourgeois institutions which oppress and suffocate them is broken, then it would not bother us in the least if the decisive blows were delivered even by those who are not yet conscious of the aim of the struggle”*²². Against the Bordigist conception, we must recall that it is in the very process of the revolution that the proletariat becomes conscious of its revolutionary goals under the leadership of the class party. The party thus provides the political capacity to the rest of the class to destroy the old capitalist system. A Party which attempts to lead an unconscious mass like a general leads an army will be able to utilize only substitutionist expedients. Since it won't lead the class, it will carry out its task in its place.

The Tasks of a Communist Party in the Revolution

Ultimately, it is on the question of the Russian revolution where the main mistake is found. Indeed, the pamphlet identifies rightly that one of the roles of the party is to raise the proletariat's class consciousness: *“What do revolutionaries do to ensure that class consciousness moves forward? They participate in every struggle and in its organisation, and from beginning to end they use the driving force of each combat to take the greatest possible number of steps towards the constitution of*

*the proletariat as a force capable of overthrowing the dominant system. The aim of communist intervention is to contribute to this apprenticeship (...) The intervention of communists thus consists essentially in stimulating the forward march of the workers' consciousness and combat — in using each moment of the proletariat's combat to make it evolve qualitatively and collectively towards the world revolution and communism.”*²³. This is correct but insufficient. While it is true that one of the roles of the class party is to favour and accelerate the process of attaining class consciousness, we also have to underline the other equally important facet of the party: the political leadership in the class struggle.

Thus, if we take the example of the Russian revolution, the ICC pamphlet sanctifies a mythical revolution in which a pure working class is supposed to have made the revolution. *“During the seizure of power in Russia, the action of armed detachments of the proletariat took place **under the control of the collective will of millions of proletarians**. It was the whole, conscious proletariat that directed the march of events, even if this participation did not take a spectacular, anarchic form. The fusion of the revolutionary wills of the whole proletariat really existed in this moment. It lived through a thousand channels, through the contacts and innumerable exchanges between the soviets, the districts, the revolutionary committee and the workers, between the Red Guards and the Bolsheviks... Everywhere, the revolutionary flame burned unceasingly, setting light to people's energies, unleashing initiatives from every quarter. Propositions and decisions were born spontaneously from this mass of millions of workers. And at the same time, the consciousness gained by all these proletarians in arms, their wills welded together in pursuit of the same aim, gives the overall picture a remarkable appearance of calm, decision and precision.”* (idem). This picture would be truthful if the fundamental importance of the Bolshevik Party in the very process of the revolution had been underlined. In fact, it is Lenin's party which gave the working class the political capacity to make the revolution by leading it towards the revolutionary aims of the Communist Program. If this pamphlet erases from history the basic role of the Bolshevik party, it is because it denies on principle the leading role of the party during the revolution and reduces it to a mere “educator” of the working class.

which we explain our critical claim of *What is to be Done?*
22 . <http://sinistra.net/lib/upt/compro/lipa/lipanbeboe.html#text>

23 . ICC pamphlet, *Communist Organization and Class Consciousness*, ch. How to Homogenize Class Consciousness
(http://en.internationalism.org/pamphlets/cconc/5_homogenise)

Internationalist Communist Tendency

Before sifting through the CWO pamphlet, we have to make a preliminary observation. The pamphlet is only signed by the Communist Workers Organization, the British section of the Internationalist Communist Tendency, and has not yet been translated into other languages. According to us, this is a political weakness. First, we don't know what is the position of the other sections of the ICT on this pamphlet. For instance, does *Battaglia Comunista*, the Italian section of the ICT, agree with it? Are there any divergences, slight differences, debates? We don't know. We believe that the ICT would greatly benefit from a statement on this pamphlet. Second, the fact that the pamphlet has not been translated, at least into the other main international languages, strongly reduces its international influence. These two facets of the same weakness have their roots in a different understanding that we and the ICT have on political centralization. We hope we'll be able to discuss this question more deeply with the ICT in the future.

We agree and support the method that the CWO utilizes in its pamphlet to present its position on class consciousness. Instead of taking a "philosophical" and abstract point of view, like we can reproach the ICC pamphlet for doing in some parts, the CWO starts from the historical point of view, thus from a Marxist point of view. It explains the difference between bourgeois materialism and historical materialism, the difference between bourgeois and proletarian class consciousness. Then it goes over all the main debates of the revolutionary working class movement during the 19th and 20th centuries. We won't discuss these questions in this text since they have already been dealt with in the first part (see *RG #6*). Let's just note the broad community of ideas between the CWO and ourselves.

The Mass Strike

The only divergence we can point out and which is worth debating is the rejection by s of regroupement of revolutionaries.

Robin, February 2017.the CWO of the mass strike. On this point, in her book *Mass Strike, Party and Unions*, Rosa Luxemburg "*argues that in the mass strike the economic and the political are of equal*

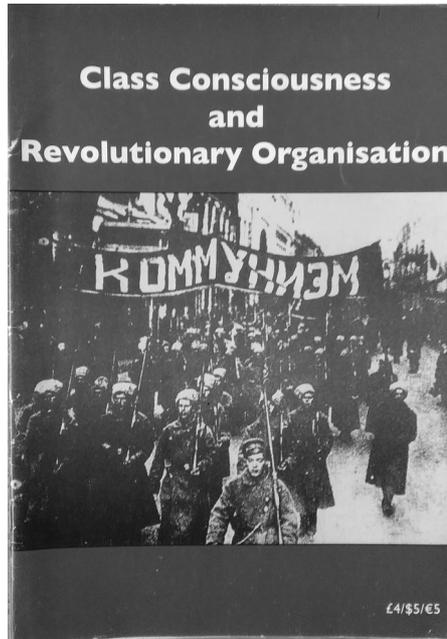
importance."²⁴ According to the CWO, Luxemburg "*consistently fails to analyse the content of the struggle and this in the end appears to leave her as a worshipper of spontaneity.*"²⁵

Rosa Luxemburg does not give equal importance to the economic and political factors of the class struggle. More precisely, she affirms that the economic and the political are two indissociable factors of the class struggle in general and of the process of acquisition of class consciousness by the proletariat in particular. Thus it is a dialectical conception which conceives that political consciousness is also based on the economic needs of a class which is revolutionary from the historical and political point of view because it is economically exploited under the capitalist system. On the contrary, the mechanical schema of the class struggle tends to conceive the party as a disembodied leadership, external to the proletariat, which must then inject the revolutionary program into the class struggle.

In short, the CWO arguments are weak on this point and we fully claim Luxemburg's conception of the mass strike. "*If we now leave the pedantic scheme of demonstrative mass*

strikes artificially brought about by order of parties and trade unions, and turn to the living picture of a peoples' movement arising with elementary energy, from the culmination of class antagonisms and the political situation – a movement which passes, politically as well as economically, into mass struggles and mass strikes – it becomes obvious that the task of social democracy does not consist in the technical preparation and direction of mass strikes, but, first and foremost, in the political leadership of the whole movement.

The social democrats are the most enlightened, most class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat. They cannot and dare not wait, in a fatalist fashion, with folded arms for the advent of the "revolutionary situation," to wait for that which in every spontaneous peoples' movement, falls from the



**CWO pamphlet on
*Class Consciousness and
Revolutionary Organisation***

24 . *Class Consciousness and Revolutionary Organisation*, CWO, p. 27

25 . *idem*, p.28.

clouds. On the contrary, they must now, as always, hasten the development of things and endeavour to accelerate events. This they cannot do, however, by suddenly issuing the “slogan” for a mass strike at random at any odd moment, but first and foremost, by making clear to the widest layers of the proletariat the inevitable advent of this revolutionary period, the inner social factors making for it and the political consequences of it. If the widest proletarian layer should be won for a political mass action of the social democrats, and if, vice versa, the social democrats should seize and maintain the real leadership of a mass movement – should they become, in a political sense, the rulers of the whole movement, then they must, with the utmost clearness, consistency and resoluteness, inform the German proletariat of their tactics and aims in the period of coming struggle”.²⁶ This is a dialectical conception of the class struggle. It would not be fair to label it as spontaneism.

The Tasks of a Communist Party During the Revolution

Contrary to the ICC pamphlet, the CWO constantly underlines the leading role of the party during the revolution. « *The proletarian party is a guide, a leadership to direct mass proletarian action towards the overthrow of the old order. Whilst the party has an important guiding role in the actual process of insurrection, and will have to lead in that insurrection, in the last resort it has to be this mass of the class, not the party which finally overthrows the old order by drawing an even greater mass into the process which begins to build a new one.* »²⁷ It is effectively thanks to the Party's political leadership that the class can massively elevate its consciousness and thus set up the goals and the strategies of the communist program in the revolutionary process.

Consequently, the question of who seizes the power, the party or the class, in the revolution becomes in a sense a false question. As the CWO emphasizes when it deals with the events of the Russian Revolution, « *the distinction between party and class will blur in a situation where the party, by all measurable criteria, has the overwhelming support of the mass of the class.* » However, we must notice that if the distinction between class and party in the revolution tends to fade, it is because the working

class rises to the Party's level and not because the Party descends to the class' level.

The question won't be posed as “who is taking the power? The class or the Party?” It will be “what direction does the revolution takes?” The Communist Program under the leadership of the Party or the different dead-ends that the various bourgeois parties claiming to represent the working class will present? Thus, if we take the example of the Russian Revolution, there is no need to question who will actually take the power, the class or the Party. However, the correct analysis of the October 1917 revolution highlights that the revolutionary program of the Bolsheviks responded to the needs of the mass of proletarians and this orientation prevailed over the reformist, Kerenskyist and Menshevik orientations.

The Party having a role of political leadership and being an active part within the class struggle, it goes without saying that its militants will exercise functions of power within the unitary organs such as the workers' councils. But, and herein lies a fundamental distinction, they'll do it as a political leadership which must ensure the political elevation of the rest of the class. They may never carry out these tasks as specialists. The Party is the vanguard of the class, not a separate elite.

The State during the Period of Transition

In conclusion, we have to admit that despite some mostly secondary divergences with the ICT, we find ourselves much more in agreement with the CWO pamphlet than with the ICC one. Even though the ICC pamphlet makes some good developments, it does not categorically claim the need for the leading role of the class Party and, consequently, it opens the door to councilist conceptions. On the other hand, the CWO pamphlet, from firm theoretical premises, strongly claims the leading role of the Party. This reinforces our point of view according to which the ICT has a central role today among the groups of the Communist Left and in the process of their regroupment.

Also, we must reaffirm the basic principle of the Communist Left in relation to the lessons that the Russian Revolution passed on to us, a principle which is by the way a common heritage of the ICC and the ICT. The class Party must never merge with the state of the period of transition. As the CWO rightly writes on different occasions in its pamphlet, “*proletarian parties are not governmental parties.*”²⁸

This is simply due to the fact that, after the seizure of power by the proletariat, two antagonistic poles form in the post-revolutionary society. The first pole is that

26 . *The Mass Strike*, part 6 (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1906/mass-strike/ch06.htm>). Let's note that the CWO utilizes this passage to lighten its own criticism to *The Mass Strike*... which comes to weaken even more its argumentation against it.

27 *Class Consciousness and Revolutionary Organisation*, CWO, p. 35

28 . *idem*, p. 39

of the world revolution whose interests are most clearly expressed in the world Communist Party. The other pole is that of the administration of the revolutionary territory by different organs which represent the “semi-state”, that is the state of the period of transition which manages a society which, even though it has entered a process of revolutionary transformation, still contains leftovers of capitalist society (see note “a” at the end of this text). The tension between these two poles depends of the relation of forces within the revolution. If the world revolution wins ground, then the economic transformation accelerates and the state of the period of transition tends to fade. If, on the contrary, the world revolution is suffocating, then the state of the period of transition quickly becomes “socialism in one country”. If the class Party becomes a state Party, then it shows it has lost any revolutionary

character to become a government party such as Social Democracy and Stalinism in their times.

It would be beneficial to the Communist Left to again put on the agenda a discussion on the period of transition which would be one moment of the general discussion that is part of the process of regroupement of revolutionaries.

Robin, February 2017.

Note “a” : *“An evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at once as much as possible until such time as a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to throw the entire lumber of the state on the scrap heap.”* (Engels, Introduction to *The Civil War in France*, 1891)

Extracts of the Theses of the Abstentionist Communist Faction of the Italian Socialist Party – May 1920

(...) The communist doctrine and economic determinism do not see communists as passive spectators of historical destiny but on the contrary as indefatigable fighters. Struggle and action, however, would be ineffective if divorced from the lessons of doctrine and of experience seen in the light of the communist critique.

The revolutionary work of communists is based on the organisation into a party of those proletarians who unite a consciousness of communist principles with the decision to devote all their energy to the cause of the revolution. The party, organised internationally, functions on the basis of discipline towards the decisions of the majority and towards the decisions of the central organs chosen by that majority to lead the movement. (...)

What distinguishes communists is not that, in every situation and in every episode of the class struggle, they call for the immediate mobilisation of all proletarian forces for a general insurrection. What distinguishes them is that they clearly say that the phase of insurrection is an inevitable outcome of the struggle, and that they prepare the proletariat to face it in conditions favourable to the success and the further development of the revolution.

Depending on the situation - which the party can better assess than the rest of the proletariat - the party can therefore find itself confronted with the necessity to act in order to hasten or to delay the moment of the decisive battle. In any event, the specific task of the party is to fight both against those who, desiring to hasten revolutionary action at any price, could drive the proletariat into disaster, and against the opportunists who exploit every occasion in which decisive action is undesirable in order to block the revolutionary movement by diverting the action of the masses towards other objectives. The Communist Party, on the contrary, must lead the action of the masses always further in an effective preparation for the final and inevitable armed struggle against the defensive forces of bourgeois rule.

(<http://www.pcint.org/>)

On the Role and Structure of the Revolutionary Organization

The Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT) has published in English on its website a text on The Role and Structure of the Revolutionary Organisation that the Partito Comunista Internazionalista-Battaglia Comunista had presented at the 2nd Conference of the groups of the Communist Left in 1978. The presentation of the Communist Workers Organization, the ICT affiliate in Great Britain, says that this publication is “part of a discussion (...) inside the Internationalist Communist Tendency” and that it hopes it “will ... [renew] debate on the various issues facing the formation of a truly international and internationalist class party”. For our part, and in relation to our internal debates on the question of class consciousness (see in this issue the 2nd part of a contribution on this subject), we have decided to participate in the debate of the ICT through a formal statement on this text. Even though some formulations may seem outdated since they address questions of that time, this text provides a programmatic basis on which the groups and the militants today claiming the Communist Left should pronounce. For our part, we adopt the points of the two first parts that we publish here. The last part, The Class and the Party, will be published in the next issue of this journal. Besides the lack of space in this issue, this part is the one which raises more questions since it deals with the “internationalist factory groups” put forward by the PCInt at that time. Thus we’ll come back to this in the next journal.

So as to include as many comrades as possible in our reflections and in the debate opened up by the ICT, we join our comments (result of our internal discussion) after each point of the text. They are in square brackets and in italics. Certainly, this way has the disadvantage of not being exhaustive. But it has the merit of clearly pointing out the agreements and the levels of understanding of the questions as well as favouring critical reflection and discussion. We thus invite the greatest number of groups, circles, militants, sympathizers, to participate in this debate based on the ICT text and so be an active factor of the “regroupment” around the ICT, as pole of political reference, so that we can develop as much as possible the political basis for the future Party.

A last word in regards to the French publication: we have not fully taken on board the French translation realized at that time by the International Communist Current for the 1978 Conference. As any translation of a political text, the political understanding and positions determine also the quality of the translation whatever is the honesty and will of the translator. The original translation, no doubt it was a good one, is nevertheless weakened by the approach still clearly marked by councilism which affected this organisation for one part and, for the other, by its then ignorance of the history of the PCInt in Italy since 1943.

The IGCL, February 2017

The Role and Structure of the Revolutionary Organisation (Partito Comunista Internazionalista – Battaglia Comunista, 1978)

Communist Consciousness

We hold to the acquisitions of revolutionary theory elaborated by Marx in *The German Ideology*, confirmed by the practical and theoretical work of Lenin, reaffirmed by the first two Congresses of the Third International and in the formation of the Communist Party of Italy. They were defended by the Italian Left inside the Committee of Entente, and throughout the 1930s and 1940s according to which:

[We share this introduction because it underlines the theoretical and programmatic continuity of the working class movement and, in particular, of its political organisations, or party, since the Communist League until today. It is a fundamental point which distinguishes the Communist Left from various political currents and groups which present themselves as revolutionary. It is not a formal question, a “fetishism” of organisation, but a

willingness to reclaim the method which must underlie the thinking and the action of communists. We can call it the “party method”.]

1 – Since history is the history of class struggle, it is the proletariat which will accomplish the decisive step that will take humanity from the realm of necessity to the world of freedom.

[This first point reaffirms two of the main principles of Marxism – the struggle of the classes as motor of history and the proletariat as exploited and revolutionary class. Obviously, unreservedly, we make it our own.]

2 – The proletariat cannot gradually conquer a position of strength within capitalist society; the continued existence of the capitalist mode of production does not gradually diminish the power of the bourgeoisie, as was the case where previous rising classes were confronting earlier exploiting classes. On the contrary, the power of capital over society tends to become absolute and to exert itself

on the deepest layers of civil society.

[Still based both on historical experience – here the Paris Commune – as well as on Marxist theory and the Communist Program, this point reaffirms the revolutionary character of the proletariat and rejects any “progressive” or “reformist” conception of the process leading to socialism through reforms or acquired positions such as the bourgeois Left in general, the Socialist parties, and above all the leftism of the Stalinist, Trotskyist and Anarchist varieties, defends under one form or another. The tendency towards the absolute domination of capital confirms the requirement for confronting the capitalist state and for active revolutionary rupture.]

3 – From the very existence of a class forced into a position of decisive antagonism against other classes concretely “emerges the consciousness of the need for a fundamental revolution, communist consciousness”. [K. Marx, *The German Ideology*].

[The proletarian revolution requires consciousness and specifically communist consciousness. It is also important to point out that the text bases itself on Karl Marx's work The German Ideology in which he certainly most profoundly elaborates on class consciousness. As such, it is a theoretical work of the highest importance for the communist movement.]

4 – It is during periods of crisis, when the bourgeoisie is no longer able to control the explosion of the contradictions inherent in its mode of production and its social relations, that the possibility of a revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois power is put on the historical agenda.

[We globally agree. But it seems to us that the formulation remains a bit vague. In effect, it is not said when, or in which conditions (except in a “period of crisis”), the ruling class is no longer capable of controlling the explosion of capitalism's contradictions. It is clearer in Lenin's words because he focuses on the notion of class struggle when he says in Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder that “it is only when the “lower classes” do not want to live in the old way and the “upper classes” cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph”. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the revolution is not possible at just any moment and that it matters that the objective and subjective historical conditions be present for it to take place successfully]

5- This revolution “is necessary ... not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew” (Marx). And “both for the production on a

mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution”. (idem)

[Once more the PCInt rightly bases itself on The German Ideology. The process which drives the proletariat to the revolution is a process during which it is the proletarian class as a whole which, through its struggle against capitalism leading to the destruction of the latter, “by a practical movement” acquires the communist consciousness “on a mass scale”.]

6 – During the period leading up to it, and during the revolutionary process itself, communist consciousness is found amongst a minority of individuals from the working class and other classes, but it derives from the very existence of the proletariat, from the objective nature of class antagonisms, and continually refers back to it. It draws from this objective situation its strength and its materialist nature, and is thus the patrimony of the whole class.

[When K. Marx speaks of “the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness”, he distinguishes two dimensions of the communist consciousness: its depth – the communist program – and its extension within the great proletarian masses. As long as this “production on mass scale” is not achieved, the communist consciousness is “borne” by a more or less important minority of revolutionaries. However, the class consciousness is not external to the class since it comes from its very existence. This point provides the basis for understanding the question of the party. The party is inherent to the class precisely because the consciousness of the class is heterogeneous. Thus a part within its ranks is more conscious and that is why it has a particular importance and responsibility. This fundamental position is based on the materialist understanding of the relations of capitalist production and in particular on the fact that capitalist competition also tends to generate competition between the proletarians as labour force.]

7 – As the expression of the historic movement and programme of the proletariat, communist consciousness cannot be defined as ‘ideology’ in the Marxist sense; on the contrary, it is the most complete instrument for grasping social and economic reality as a whole, since its aim is to change this very reality. Whereas bourgeois revolutionary consciousness was directed against the external aspects of aristocratic rule and was based on the necessity to substitute one exploiting class (the

bourgeoisie) for another, communist consciousness is directed against the very class nature of present-day society and all previous societies: its goal is the elimination of class divisions. It is not the last theory in the proper sense of the word, but it is certainly the last revolutionary theory. The proof of this is the fact that the ideologies which have broken away from revolutionary Marxism in the so-called ‘socialist’ countries (which for communists are a form of state capitalism fully integrated into the class enemy’s international line-up) have no road to take except the traditional one of classical bourgeois ideology – even though they don’t even do this very well.

[We share this point except the last sentence. It is more correct and precise to speak of abandonment and betrayal of Marxism by the Stalinist Communist Parties. The verb “break away” could allow an understanding that their “reflections” had developed from Marxism, as if it was in continuity with it. This is precisely what the present Left and Leftist parties claim and what the communists must denounce and fight against. Certainly, as the text goes back to 1978, it might be a formulation that the ICT (and the PCint) would not adopt as such today.]

8 – The relationship which links the class to its communist consciousness is the same one which links the class to the future exercise of its dictatorship: it resides in the objective social and economic contradictions, in the very dynamic of history. It will not be present in the minds and psychology of all proletarians until the time when they are ready to make their own history.

[The first sentence is very important because it is built on a “dialectical and materialist” understanding of the historical future as material factor of the present and because it expresses the comprehension of the link between the final revolutionary perspective and the development of the class consciousness. Also important is the second part which distinguishes again the communist consciousness and its propagation within the class as a whole.]

9 – It is necessary to definitively reject and fight against the theory – alien to Marxism and typical of petty bourgeois idealism – which maintains that communist consciousness can grow and become generalised outside of the revolutionary process itself. It is based on the idealist principle of the superiority of ideas, and can only deceive potential revolutionaries with an impossible vision of reality, drawing them away from their unavoidable duty as communists and obstructing their work.

[Here the text is precisely based on what K. Marx develops in particular in *The German Ideology*. The text rejects idealism – as approach and method of

understanding. It underlines its danger, in particular the one which ignores the practical revolutionary fight led by the international proletariat as class especially in its political dimension, that is in its permanent confrontation with the political forces of the capitalist class in the “workers’ milieu” such as the unions and the Left and Leftist parties].

10 – This fundamentally anti-Marxist thesis was adopted by the council communist movement, which, beginning from an **erroneous evaluation** of the process of revolution and counter-revolution in Russia, arrived at positions alien and opposed to those of the communist movement.

[Along with the previous one, this point clearly rejects the “Apoliticism” and “Economism” fought by Lenin at that time. Today it is Anarchism as well as the “councilist” current which comes from the “communist movement of the councils” of the 1930s, which are the bearers of this same apoliticism that must be combated. In particular, this current denounces the experience of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik Party as bourgeois experiences. Thus it is led to reject the fundamental theoretical and political lessons of the Russian and European revolutionary experience of the years 1917-1923, such as the relation of the proletariat towards the capitalist state, the state arising from the working class insurrection, that is the one of the period of transition between capitalism and communism, and on the exercise of its class dictatorship; as well on the role of political leadership of the party in the revolutionary process, the working class insurrection, and the confrontation with the state.]

11 – A position close to that of the council communist movement, and which also has to be rejected, recognises that only the revolutionary process makes it possible for communist consciousness to become generalised, but which reduces this to a “consciousness of the need for revolution”, thereby renouncing the organised struggle against the highly organised forces of the bourgeoisie; although the defenders of this position talk about the revolution, they are actually working for the preservation of capitalism and for the hegemony of one of the two imperialist blocs.

[Some parts of this current, political groups or circles, don't label themselves as “Councilists”, indeed they claim “all the Communist Lefts”, sometimes even the Communist Left of Italy and they still get to the point where they “talk about the revolution” and the party. By reducing consciousness to simply the awareness of the need for the revolution, they reduce the role of the Communists to mere propaganda for the “idea of the revolution since it is necessary”. Thus, they ignore the concrete

political dimension of each daily fight of the proletarian struggle – whatever is its extent and depth – in which, by definition, as the most “conscious” elements because they “bear” the Communist Program, the communist groups and the party have a constant and crucial role to play. The result is that they postpone until “tomorrow”, until the revolution, the setting up of the party and so theorize a passive and often hostile attitude towards the concrete process which leads to the foundation of the party. This vision opposes the spontaneous dimension of the class fight to its political dimension without seeing the dynamic (dialectical) link between both. In this sense, and even if the PCint text responds to the 1978 imperialist situation, the lesson of the “negative” character of Councilism of any kind for the proletarian struggle is more than ever actual.]

12 – Similarly we have to reject the position that communist consciousness, the entire inheritance of principles, theses, and positions pointing towards communist revolution, is something given once and for all, and doesn't change from one historic phase of the movement to another. Those who gravitate around this position forget that communist consciousness is something directly attached to the class and to the experiences it objectively goes through in its subordination to capital. They therefore forget that theses and positions have to alter with changes in the real situation in which the class lives. The main problem is to recognise the characteristics of the class struggle through all these changes, and to draw the necessary lessons from it. Naturally all the variations in the capitalist mode of production cannot, despite the bourgeois theories of the national communist parties, alter the basic substance of class society, or the fact that the proletariat is, and remains, the class which is economically exploited and socially and politically dominated.

*[This point is as important too because it rejects the vision of the invariance of the Communist Program such as it had been developed by the so-called “Bordigist” current which came from the PCint after the 1952 split and which converts the program and the positions into dogma rather than a method of action. It underlines much about the changes which can occur in the class. The program can and **must** enrich itself with the historical experiences – whether they are (temporary) successes or defeats – and the movement of the revolutionary class.]*

The Organisation of the Revolutionaries: The Party

1 – In the entire period leading up to the revolution,

and even during the initial phase of the revolution itself, communist consciousness is possessed by a minority, i.e. only a minority possesses and acts on the basis of this consciousness. This is a real and concrete fact which is beyond discussion. This minority has the duty of forging the tools necessary for the class to develop, in the moments of crisis in the capitalist mode of production, this “practical movement”, the revolution – the only way that mass communist consciousness matures within the class itself. In the fullest sense the organisation of the revolutionary minority is the party.

[We agree with this point which is very important. It is the result of the consequent application of Point 6 of the first part. In particular, and even if the PCint does not adopt our formulation, it introduces the distinction between the two dimensions of the class consciousness: the communist consciousness borne by “a minority” and “the mass communist consciousness”, that is between the class consciousness (the Communist Program) and its extension more or less enlarged within the class as a whole, within its masses, according to the moments and the development of the struggle between the classes. This distinction is essential to enable the founding and the understanding of the existence, the need, and the real role of the party as organ of political leadership of the class.]

2 – The party has the permanent task of giving back to the class the entire legacy of theses, principles, and expressions of the struggle for communism, as that communist consciousness which has come about through the experiences which the working class itself has lived through.

*[We see very well the close link between the party and the class as well as the main and fundamental task of the former. The party can do nothing without the experience of the class. It draws its positions from it. But the class is powerless if the party does not act, or rather **does not struggle**, to “give back”, “to send back”, to the class its theoretical heritage of political principles and positions.]*

3 – The party is therefore the medium through which the relationship between the class and its consciousness has been expressed throughout the entire history of capitalism's existence, just as it will be during the period of transition from capitalism to communism.

[We agree with this point on the link between the party, the class and its consciousness since we know that the party is a part of the class. As well, we agree with – and want to insist on – the fact that this relation between the class and its consciousness does not rise up only during revolutionary periods but also, and constantly, all along “the entire history of

capitalism's existence", and thus along the proletariat's history, as labour force which is both exploited and revolutionary; and including during the period of transition from capitalism to communism as long as the classes are not totally suppressed, that is as long as the whole of humanity has not been integrated into the proletariat which will announce at its turn its disappearance as a class.]

4 – The seizure of power by the working class, and thus the beginning of the revolution for the whole of society, is only possible during the crises of capitalism and when the class recognises, in the principles and programme of revolutionaries, its own historic interests; when, during the assault on the bourgeois state, it rallies around the party and its programme.

[We agree even though at least two points should be specified: the seizure of power is only possible after a period of double power has existed between the bourgeois state and the workers' councils as organs of the insurrection and the dictatorship of the proletariat to come – this is a positive lesson of the 1917 Russian Revolution and a negative lesson of the 1918-1919 German Revolution; although it is fundamental that the class gathers around the party and its program for the seizure of power, this does not mean that it already adopts the whole program as such. We should not conclude from this point that the party has only to reveal its program and the day the proletariat accepts it, it would automatically be the revolution. For the proletariat to adopt its program and gather around the material force the party represents, it matters that the communists – already grouped in a party or not – be actively involved in the entire process of developing consciousness.]

5 – The ups and downs of the party-organisation faithfully reflect the ups and downs of the life of the class. It almost disappears during periods of profound reflux when the bourgeoisie reigns supreme on the economic and political level. But just as the objective antagonism between the classes can never disappear, so communist consciousness which is nourished by this antagonism can never disappear either. It may though be reduced to the point where the organisation of revolutionaries seems to have disappeared. This is particularly the case when the defeat of the class leads to fear and disillusionment in the ranks of revolutionaries themselves, and thus to confusion and aberration on the level of communist consciousness. This was confirmed in Italy in the period around 1948, when the definitive victory of Stalinism – which had disarmed the class and led it to re-forged its own chains – provoked division in the ranks of the unified organisation, the

Internationalist Communist Party, which had arisen in 1943 as a response to a potential reawakening of the class from the profound depression of Stalinism.

[We are particularly in agreement with the fact that the class consciousness can never disappear even though its extension within the masses is extremely reduced or present only in a small minority. Furthermore, the "downs" of the class are not so much due to the domination at the economic and political levels – which will continue as long as the mode of capitalist production (in the case of the former) and the capitalist state power (in the case of the latter) are not destroyed – but above all because of the massive bourgeois ideological domination. Finally, this point raises the question of the maintenance of the existence of the PCint as "Party" as such after "the definitive victory of Stalinism". We have not dealt with this question, just mentioned it during our internal discussions. It can seem to be today a secondary question in regards to the existence of the Partito Comunista Internazionale since 1943 until today, all the more since the ICT clearly claims not to be the party. As such, we are not sure this question represents a genuine political stake today, still less a disagreement of principle.]

6 – The existence of several organisations claiming the title of the party in no way undermines the continuity of the party and the necessity for militants to defend it. This was the task of the comrades of the left fraction in France and Belgium vis-a-vis the party founded at Livorno in 1921 throughout the period in which the Third International and the Soviet power had not yet, in their estimation, completed their cycle of degeneration. This was completed with the Soviet Union's participation in the war in Spain as an agent of the counter-revolution, and in one of the blocs in the world imperialist war. The defence of revolutionary continuity was then crystallised in the new Internationalist Communist Party, which reunited in its theses and programme the whole corpus of experience and elaboration from the previous period. The fact that this party was later divided into two trunks and that one of them gave rise to groups and currents that were often openly counter-revolutionary (we are thinking of *Invariance*) has not led to the total disappearance or betrayal of the bases of the 1943 programme.

[We agree with this point and in particular with the first sentence. As well, we share and consider "the defence of revolutionary continuity" as a fundamental point of method and struggle. For the so-called "Italian" Communist Left, this continuity goes from the Congress of the foundation of the PC d'Italia in 1921 until the foundation of the PCint in

1943, through the Committee of Intesa (1925) which was announcing the struggle of fraction, the “Italian” fraction in France and Belgium in the 1930s around the journal Bilan, and during the war. Here it is important to recall that, when the constitution of the Party in Italy had been announced, the Italian fraction abroad agreed with the constitution of the Party. We believe that the setting up of the Party in 1943 was dictated, justified and thus necessary given the circumstances which were then prevailing in Italy because of the movement of the working class there on the one hand and the expectation of working class responses in Europe on the other, some expressions of which had already appeared, particularly in Germany, just like they had occurred in 1917-1919. The fact that this schema was not repeated does not invalidate the constitution of the party even if, in the following years, the “formal” party lost its raison d’être because of the proletarian retreat.]

7 – Although we cannot exclude the possibility of a revolutionary upheaval in one country under the guidance of a ‘national’ party at a time when the world party of the proletariat has not yet been formed, past historical experience and the growing supra-national concentration of imperialism teaches us that revolutionaries must seek to forge the international party on the basis of the theoretical and programmatic platform expressed by the communist consciousness of revolutionaries for half a century. The supra-nationality of capital, i.e. the identical class interests of the bourgeoisie in all countries, is matched by the supra-nationality of proletarian interests. A revolution that is victorious in one country will not survive for long if it does not have the active solidarity of the world proletariat, not only on the defensive level, but also through revolutionary assault on the whole capitalist system. The world party of the revolution is essential for the execution of this vital strategic plan; and, because it is so concerned with the generalised attack on capital it will subordinate to this plan the tactics of its section in the country where the revolution first breaks out.

*[To subordinate the “national” (or territorial) tactical political orientations to the requirements of the international extension of the revolution is a question of principle which **only** the Italian Left, amongst all the oppositions to the degeneration of the Communist International, defended and bore in a*

practical and consequent way against the Russian party and the International in process of Stalinisation. We have one reservation on this point when it contemplates the possibility of a “national” party which should be discussed and clarified.]

8 – This is the perspective the party will have for its international work. The supra-nationality of proletarian interests and of the party’s strategy will be reflected in the centralised organisation of the party. The party is the indispensable tool of the proletarian revolution, because only the party can incorporate into a programmatic political platform the ongoing developments coming out of the objective situation of the class, developments which would otherwise remain extremely incoherent and easy prey to sectarianism and corporatism – both expressions of bourgeois ideology – even before being hit by the repression of the bourgeois state. It is essential that the party is solidly regrouped around its central positions, that it is organised on the principle of centralism and not of federalism. Just as the class transmits to the party the multiple and sometimes contradictory experience which the party has to elaborate in a unifying programme and then return to the class, so within the party itself experiences of militant activity and strategic and tactical positions can go from the periphery to the centre and back to the periphery.

*[The question of the internationally centralized organisation and functioning of the party is not just an “organisational” question: one of the lessons passed on by the “Italian Left” is precisely that this centralization is based on the political unity and homogeneity “around its central positions”. This requires the constant development of an internal political life running through the whole party. For our part, we consider that this mode of centralized functioning at the international level has to be already developed in the life and the development of the present communist groups. These ones can't consider themselves as local or national expressions but **directly** as expressions of the international proletariat whatever are their geographical limits. It is not simply a question of “organisational functioning” but a question of method of action and thinking indispensable for the daily application of the principle of proletarian internationalism.]*

(End of the first part of the PCint text)

OUR POSITIONS

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

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

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

OUR ACTIVITY

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

OUR ORIGINS

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