

**I N T E R N A T I O N A L C O M M U N I S T
B U L L E T I N**

**Organ of the Fraction of the International Communist Left
(English version)**

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Contents

(The texts translated and available in English are in bold. The others aren't translated into English.

Warning : the translations into English we do, are made by comrades whose knowledge of this language is very relative. Thus, besides the lack of easiness for the reading, our English texts may present some mistakes and confusions which aren't political but "technical". One can refer to the French and Spanish versions.

In front of the growing working class danger, the bourgeoisie opposes the democratic poison.....	1
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CLASS STRUGGLE

The “Indignados” on the streets, for now lacking of real proletarian anger (Statement of the Internationalist Communist Tendency).....	2
---	----------

“Indignados” - Document of the “Commissione de Lavoro” of Roma.....	4
--	----------

The “Mass Strike” : a fact or a process ?	8
--	----------

INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

Disaster in Japan : Capitalism destroys us, let's destroy Capitalism.....	9
--	----------

Libya 2011 = North Italy and Warsaw 1944

PROLETARIAN CAMP

Correspondence with the *Istituto Onorato Damen*

TEXTS OF THE WORKERS MOVEMENT

Seize Power or Seize the Factory (Bordiga, 1920)	9
---	----------

In Memory of the Commune (Lenin, 1911).....	10
--	-----------

In front of the growing working class danger, the bourgeoisie opposes the democratic poison

It is now obvious for all, workers as well as bourgeois and capitalist governments, that the international proletariat is rising up and revolting massively against the **class** consequences of the capitalist economical crisis. From the struggles of the last fall in the main Western Europe countries - just to mention these ones -, to the working class movements in the Arab countries, up to the Spanish "Indignous" movement and the massive and persistent rejection of the austerity measures in Greece, the international working class refuses to pay for the crisis and to accept without fighting back the dramatical misery that capitalism attempts to impose everywhere.

Facing this situation, the ruling class leads at the international level a wide offensive against the working class by speeding up its "democratic" mystification campaign. Today, it exerts it permanently and in a more concentrated manner than it did these last years. It develops it in all possible manners and at different levels which correspond to the intensity and the immediate conditions of the classes struggle. In particular, the present campaigns which are essentially based on lie and distortion of reality, aim at make believe that :

- the "democratic revolution" is the only fight to lead (Tunisia, Egypt, Arab countries...);
- the present struggles in the "democratic" countries are actually struggles "for more democracy" whether it is at the level of their form as well as their goal and content (the organisation "democracia real ya !" - "real democracy now !" - in the movement of the Spanish "indignados" obviously looks at taking the leadership of the workers fight to derail it towards the bourgeois ground of the "real democracy" - sic !).

All the fractions of the bourgeoisie, from the extreme-Left to the extreme-Right, are engaged - each one at its level - and share the tasks in this political offensive against the working class. The fraction of the Left and extreme-Left (stalinists, leftists, anarchists...) have for specific role to poison the working class within its very struggles by attempting to transform these ones into dead-end and mortal traps.

Today, the working class is clearly and increasingly responding to the attacks. It more and more raises the question of challenging the very existence of capitalism and of the social class which benefits of it. That is why the bourgeoisie strives to persuade the workers to direct their anger and readiness to fight towards "democratic reforms", indeed "democratic revolutions".

Democracy today, as long as capitalism does live, as long as the social classes do exist, is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, is the most efficient form of its class power. Fighting for this, is fighting to maintain capitalism, is fighting to the benefit of the enemy. On the contrary, the workers must take back the slogan of one banner seen at the June 15th demonstration in Greece¹ : *"You got the disease, we got the solution : REVOLUTION"*.

The political vanguard organizations of the working class, particularly the ones of the Communist Left, have the great responsibility of warning their class, of preventing it against the danger and to divert it from this trap of an illusory quest for a "real" and "pure" democracy in capitalism. This illusion is mortal and it is consciously put forwards by the ruling class. These political vanguard organizations must, today as never, push the proletarian fight towards the only goal which has any sense : capitalism's destruction and the setting up of a society without exploitation and without classes.

The FICL, June 19th, 2011.

"... shouting in defense of "democracy in general" is actually defense of the bourgeoisie and their privileges as exploiters. (...) Marxists have always maintained that the more developed, the "purer" democracy is, the more naked, acute and merciless the class struggle becomes, and the "purer" the capitalist oppression and bourgeois dictatorship" (Thesison Bourgeois Democracy and Dictatorship of Proletariat – 1st Congress of the International Communist – March 1919)

1. It matters to note that the stubborn and increasing refusal of the proletariat in Greece to suffer the brutal and dramatical austerity measures set up by Papandreou's socialist government, has compelled this one to a cabinet reshuffle in some emergency the very day of the June 15th demonstration. In particular, significant is the replacement of the Minister of economy. The international praises about his economical management were unanimous. The substitute, on the contrary, would have more "political" qualities. Besides the need for the Greek bourgeoisie to get a government team more united and a larger support from within the State apparatus and from the whole ruling class, while dissensions begun to appear in its ranks, this episode reveals that the true turmoil which has affected the international bourgeoisie, governments, politicians, medias, financial circles, etc. was not so much due to the financial risks – Greece's insolvency and the no-repayment of its debt -, thus of economical level in itself, but well to a **political risk** : the difficulty, indeed the impossibility, to make accept by the proletariat austerity and thus the perspective of an aggravation of the classes confrontation.

The "indignados" on the streets, for now lacking real proletarian anger

We reproduce below the statement of the comrades of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT) about the demonstrations in the greatest Spanish cities places ; in particular the Puerta del Sol in Madrid. We fully support this statement that we make our own. It's useless thus to provide an other statement to defend the same political orientations. That, in the today period and above all in the one to come which will live inescapable and increasingly massive classes confrontations, the communists can express and intervene with a single voice, cannot but favor the development of the historical fight of the proletariat and the clarification amongst the workers of the historical alternative imperialist war or communist revolution.

In particular, we support the defence of the class character of this movement and, thus, its **political dimension**, which clearly raises the question of capitalism's destruction and the need for proletarian revolution as well as the means to reach these goals. Moreover, by underlining the class character of the movement, the ICT warns the young, and less young, proletarians who demonstrates, against the dissolution of the proletarian character of the movement in categories such as the "people", the "citizens", the "youngs". It is not but becoming fixed with determination as a working class struggle that this movement will be able to develop and, through its development, to defend and indeed make advance, its demands in front of the bourgeois State ; so that it will be able to highlight a true revolutionary perspective. And certainly not by letting itself be trapped on the democratic ground and various and varied democratic slogans such as the organisation ; Democracia real, ya ! puts forwards so relaying the intense ideological hype led by the ruling class to the benefit of the bourgeois democracy within the class movements in Tunisia and in Egypt.

Furthermore, against the attempts to present the new "technologies", internet, the "social networks", etc., as the panacea and the motor of the movement, the ICT text defends to the contrary the historical experience of the working class, its methods of struggle and its historical aims : "to strike at it in the very heart of its productive system" ; solidarity between workers with job and those without ; "to expand and radicalise this social conflict on class lines, to revolutionise the whole of society from the bottom up and build a new one" ; "to build a revolutionary vanguard". These orientations oppose and are contrary to the democratic illusions and to the ecstatic celebrations, with not any criticism, of the general assemblies and of Spanish rallies on the city places. They are opposed to their fetishism. They are opposed and contrary to the myth and the trap of self-organisation seen as unique mean and aim.

These are the basic orientations which will enable to foil the traps of the bourgeois forces and will avoid to be driven to dead-ends, in particular into the trap of the "democracy now" ("¡ democracia ya !"). These are the class orientations which, only, will enable to this movement to develop and to affirm the defence of the immediate and material interests of the proletarians, whether they are with a job or without. And above all, these are the orientations which, only, can enable to carry on this class ground, on the one of the only revolutionary perspective, not only the whole proletarians but also behind them the greatest part of the population.

Finally, last merit of the ICT comrades' statement, it also responds to the expectations of the workers of the other European countries, of the Arab countries, and of the other continents who have their eyes opened to their class brothers in Spain.

In that sense, the Internationalist Communist Tendency really holds the task of the proletariat's political vanguard, the tasks of **political leadership**, or if one prefers of **political orientation**. Every time it does so, it can be ensured of our support and participation.

May 30th 2011

The Fraction of the International Communist Left.

The "indignados" on the streets, for now lacking real proletarian anger

The movement of young Spaniards, the "indignados"¹, emerged suddenly, but not unexpectedly from the seemingly flat calm of European society. From the day it burst on the scene (15 May, hence the name "15-M"), its ranks have quickly swelled, attracting thousands and thousands of people onto the streets, and even going beyond national borders². Despite the important and heavy presence of minority political forces of the institutional left, the mobilisation has been largely spontaneous and built through word of mouth and social networking pages rather than through party manifestos.

According to the manifesto of the movement "Real Democracy, Now!" the prime mover of these events, the young people in the streets seem, largely, to want greater democracy and social equality³. To many there is an obvious similarity between the Spanish 15-M movement and the Italian "grillini"⁴. It is obvious even to its boss Beppe. He wasn't slow to arrive in the square in Barcelona, pointing out the similarities of their demands

1. Indignados = "angry ones"

2. At midnight on May 21, 25,000 people gathered in the Puerta del Sol square in Madrid, at the heart of the protest were young Spaniards, breaking the ban on demonstrations before the impending elections. At the same time, some 10,000 people demonstrated in Barcelona's Plaza de Catalunya, and thousands more crowded into the streets of all major cities in Spain.

3. In short, there are many proposals for more **democratic reforms**: the abolition of several laws that are held to be unfair; including the electoral law, a referendum to confirm all the most important laws, abolition of the monarchy, complete separation between the State and the Church, removal of state funding for religious institutions, separation and no interference between politics and the judiciary; measures against corruption and the excessive power of the ruling "caste", which includes opening of the electoral rolls, exclusion of those accused of corruption from public office, reform of the financing of political parties, cutting pensions annuities, administrative decentralization, with more involvement of regions, provinces, and municipalities in the management of budgets, more direct democracy through the web and telecommunication networks. The other driving force is the struggle against **social inequality**: tax reform in favour of lower income, taxation of financial income, nationalisation of banks bailed out with state funding, the limits on job insecurity, the minimum wage. Finally, **environmental and pacifist demands**: immediate closure of all nuclear power plants and support for alternative energy, increased public transport and a decrease in private car use, cycle lanes and free tickets for the unemployed, and no reduction in military spending to intervene in any war scenario.

4. Beppe Grillo is an Italian alternative comedian who, on the premise that the Italian political establishment was already beyond a joke has started up his one political movement known as "Five Stars" (Cinque Stelle). He is the patron (boss) referred to in the next sentence.

— against the party oligarchies, for the exclusion of those accused of corruption from the electoral list and for a participatory democracy — with his. On this level it should also be noted that the main beneficiary of the movement may be the *Izquierda Unida*⁵, which is severely handicapped by the current electoral system.

But it is very doubtful that such a description of the movement explains everything. If amongst the various banners in the Puerta del Sol a large black one, stood out proclaiming "The crisis is capitalism", none of the various postings on the net spoke of it. And few people have correctly understood the social pressures that have led so many young people to take to the streets (or rather squares) across the country. Looking at the most recent figures, we find that in Spain the number of unemployed in March grew by 34,406 compared to February, reaching 4.3 million people (according to the sanitised figures of the Ministry of Labour). In the services sector alone nearly 15,000 jobs have been lost in a month, and in February, the Spanish unemployment rate was already 20.5%, the highest figure in the European Union. If you look at youth unemployment, this affects 44.6% of young people under 25 years. The Spanish government hopes to keep the state debt below 74.3% of the current figure in 2012, provided, however, they are able to drastically reduce government spending and the budget deficit, which is currently 11.4%. Whoever is elected in local elections these days, in particular, will have to deal with budgets already deep in the red. Municipalities and regions account for about half of total public expenditure. In all, there 5200 local and regional entities whose debt is around €26 billion, to which we should add about €4 billion advanced to drug companies supplying state hospitals. The movement, in fact, appears a lot more varied than the descriptions usually given. It is marked by a deep social malaise with its roots in the particular characteristics of the Spanish production system and more generally in the rampant crisis of global capitalism, that has hit the Spanish economy so hard. The real growing evil is capitalism itself, as the young Spaniards in Madrid correctly wrote. This evil growth, parasitic on the overwhelmingly proletarian of the population, certainly cannot be cured through injections of democratic illusions and equal opportunities. The deeper social aspirations that young people are trying to bring to the streets are basically legitimate, and we must support them by participating actively in the demonstrations and encouraging the expansion of the protests. Communists, however, should

5. The **United Left** (Izquierda Unida, IU) is a political coalition that was organized in 1986 as several political organisations opposed Spain joining NATO. It was formed by a number groups of leftists, greens, left-wing socialists and republicans, but was dominated by the Communist Party of Spain (PCE). It replaced the latter in the polls and got 9% at its height but has since declined.

make it clear that the hope for social equality and a real participation in “democracy” cannot be obtained “Ya!” [“Now!”], **without a radical and complete overthrow of the current social system.** It is obvious that the rich banker or industrialist will never really on be the same level as a worker or an unemployed youngster whilst the former control of the means of production and the latter can at most hope to find a job where they will be exploited according to “market” conditions.

In any case, we proletarians don’t care about the fate of the system that nourishes itself on our exploitation. Instead we want to throw acid on the roots of this evil growth, we want to strike at it in the very heart of its productive system, looking in every area for solidarity between the workers who work and the many that have lost jobs or have never found them. In Spain and elsewhere, the aim

should be to expand and radicalise this social conflict on class lines, to revolutionise the whole of society from the bottom up and build a new one that meets human needs and not those of profit. In Spain and elsewhere, the aim should be to build a revolutionary vanguard, which can unify and give political guidance in this deep social malaise. Otherwise, the plaza (square) has served only as an outlet to contain “popular” indignation, without being able to put forward a class perspective, without leaving a new and more widespread awareness of the conflicting interests in play, without outlining any prospect of broader aims to finally get rid of this system of production which is behind all the current social instability.

Battaglia Comunista #6, June 2011
Internationalist Communist Tendency.

“Indignados” - Document of the “Workers Commission” of Roma

We reproduce below a text written by the “Commissione de Lavoro” de Roma in Italy that the comrades of the ICT have published in their international press. It seems to us that the proposals put forwards by this workers commission rightly present the orientations to fulfil if the present movements such as the “indignados” want to develop and set out a true perspective of fight and victorious confrontation against the bourgeoisie. In particular, the methods, the forms, the slogans and demands put forwards here oppose categorically and from a class point of view to the orientations and slogans that all the regroupments and organisations so-called spontaneous, especially those using the internet networks and on which the bourgeois medias make so much publicity praising their democratic and... bourgeois virtue.

We thus support the efforts of this “workers commission” and this document. It is the concrete realization of the class orientations the comrades of the ICT have put forwards in the previous text of this bulletin : the “indignados” do lack of true class anger.

The FICL, June 22th, 2011.

Document of the “Commissione de Lavoro” of Roma

We publish below a document drawn up by the Rome “Labor Commission”, as part of the movement calling itself “Italian revolution — real democracy now!”. We have already published an article on the broader international movement of the “Indignados”: [The “indignados” on the streets, for now lacking real proletarian anger](#)

As the Labour Commission of the Roman movement of the Italian Revolution we identify the crisis as the motor force of the movement of Spanish *indignados* and other European countries. This is demonstrated by the attacks on the living and working conditions of the working class carried out by governments of all shades, from Berlusconi to Zapatero. We therefore believe that the question of labour should be placed at the centre of the debate in the movement both in terms of analysis and action, because we think that without the expansion of the movement to all the exploited who pay for the crisis of the capitalist system of production the movement will have no real impact on society.

On How we Want to Work

The commission aims to carry out the following work:

1. Organizing data collection on all major disputes pending in the workplace, redundancies, the numbers of unemployed and precarious workers.
2. Analysing conditions of exploitation in all these sectors and the deterioration of living conditions.
3. Developing forms of agitation which can extend our meetings in these sectors, as the Puerta del Sol assembly did.

In previous discussions we considered the causes of exploitation were linked to the conflict between capital and labour and the fact that the capitalist mode of production is now in crisis, obsolete and outdated, it is no longer able to offer anything progressive to the new generations. We also believe that crises are a fact of life under capitalism and that it is necessary to overcome the crisis of capitalism.

Data Collection

We want to collect data on pending legislation, on the laws that govern our working conditions which are more insecure, exhausting, a form of blackmail, and the numerical data that describe how many workers and their families there are and how they live today in Italy.

Conditions of Exploitation

We want to collect eye witness accounts and stories that describe the real conditions of exploitation experienced daily by workers, especially young people but not just them, starting with those who are reading this.

Forms of Agitation to Extend the Assembly Movement to the World of Labour

We believe it is necessary to extend our meetings to all workers, including temporary workers, the unemployed and all those sectors that are paying for the crisis of capitalism. In order to do this we have to start by denouncing the real conditions of exploitation experienced in the workplace.

We tried to reverse the logic through which the “issue of work” is addressed by trade unions, political parties and various politicians. Too often we have seen movements start from their policy proposals (and promptly split over them), from a citizen’s income, to the European wage, from socially useful work to less work, work for all etc.. the policy proposed has always just been put to the workers taking no account of their conditions, almost as if the worker were only useful to support this or that proposal. We do not want to discuss this or that plan to solve the problems of this system (we will never get out of it!), We would like to address the question of exploitation and fragmentation of workers in order to invite them to unite and fight.

Agitation.

We want to put the workers at the centre of our concerns inviting them to rise up against the conditions of misery and exploitation that they daily live through. For this the agitational slogans that we use are simple:

- no to starvation wages;
- no to the lack of security, accidents and deaths at work;
- no to the speed-ups and exhausting workloads;
- no to job insecurity, flexibility, to being used and thrown away
- no to layoffs and unemployment;
- no to high prices;
- yes to the collective struggle to defend our conditions;
- yes to a real struggle for better living and working conditions.

In workplaces and neighborhoods.

We agitate with the slogan that the real struggle is in our workplaces, and in our neighborhoods! Only then can we extend the fight across different sectors of society, from public and private, industrial and commercial etc..

Method of struggle.

On the mode of struggle there is little to be invented, all-out strikes, pickets, solidarity and active support of various disputes are a necessity, up to occupation of firms that are shutting down as well as roadblocks. All these are part of the history of the workers’ struggles and they have much to teach us. In general we support all forms of mobilisation aimed at blocking production and the flow of goods and, therefore, profit. Finally, we believe that it is the workers themselves who know what the most effective forms of struggle in every situation are. In this sense all we have to do is encourage them, support them, and to defend of their interests and not the real interest of this or that trade union or political group.

Forms of organisation.

We think that the only form of organisation that will allow workers to stand on their own two feet, stimulating their capacity to fight, is that of assemblies. Assemblies from below which:

- overcome the divisions and differences of race, gender, class, levels and occupations, between workers;
- unite employed and unemployed;
- overcome the tendency to delegate the defence of our interests to trade unionists and politicians;
- make decisions, or rather decide the forms, procedures, and the timing of mobilisation. They decide whether or not to accept the proposals of others.

Our viewpoint is about defending ourselves from the violent attack that the bosses are unleashing, about escaping isolation, about transforming the individual fight into a single, large, collective struggle. We have to escape inertia to begin to take our lives back into our own hands.

Only by transforming our hardship and everyone’s personal discomfort into a social problem, can we force the system to offer solutions which suit it (we can accept them or reject them) or, more likely, to declare that it cannot meet our demands, thus proving its failure.

The present work is a contribution, constantly updated, to the central assembly. The labour commission is open to anyone who wants to participate, we invite all to participate in online discussion by subscribing to the mailing list:

commlavoro_italianrevolution@googlegroups.com

The e-mail address of the commission is: commissione.lavoro@email.it

The “mass strike” : a fact or a process ?

At encounters or by mail, comrades and readers have expressed reservations, scepticism, about our analysis of the historical period and especially of the evolution of the classes struggle. We resume and keep faithful to the original ICC method of analysis, particularly with its analysis of “an historical course driving to massive class confrontations” such it has been widely developed and presented in the International Review of this organisation all along its history and more particularly in the 1980's. Amongst all these questions relating to this method of analysis, one in particular has been questioned, misunderstood and disagreed. It is our appreciation according to which a period of international “mass strike” has been opened up today. Some reject the very word of strike since strikes aren't the central element of the workers reactions of today. Others think we overestimate the level of classes struggle since speaking of “mass strike” in order to characterize the present period, would be believing that we are in a revolutionary or pre-revolutionary period.

Now, for us, it is openly, before our very eyes, that is unfolding and developing a dynamic of massive struggle at the international level. And this happens despite the attempts of silence or censorship – nothing on TV and newspapers about the great workers demonstrations in Greece at the time when was occurring the “indignados” movement in Spain -, or of distortion - the present movements would be searching for “true democracy”. The class movements in North-Africa, Tunisia, Egypt, as weak as they were, have responded to the workers reactions and struggles of the late 2010, particularly the ones of Europe (Greece, France, Great-Britain, Portugal, Spain, etc.). And at their turn, these movements in the Arabic countries to which the international proletariat was turning its attention, have become factors of encouragement to the rising and the development of struggle movements in Europe, indeed in Spain, in Greece, etc... It is actually an international dynamic of workers struggles in front of the crisis and the attacks on the living conditions, which is now developing and deepening - what ever are the obstacles that the bourgeoisie opposes to it. The process of “mass strike” is under way...

We have decided to write one of our interventions on this matter. We think that this question has to be posed and debated the most widely possible.

What Rosa Luxemburg calls “mass strike” and that she largely and clearly describes in her work, doesn't only represent 1905 in Russia, as some wrongly think, or an event of this kind ; it means a class movement which would openly pose the question of the revolution. No. Above all, it represents the class struggle and its process of development in the period that opened up at the beginning of the 20th Century, notably the process which goes up to the revolutionary period, thus which includes what is before and what prepares it : “The [1905] Russian Revolution has now effected a radical revision of the above piece of reasoning. For the first time in the history of the class struggle it has achieved a grandiose realisation of the idea of the mass strike and – as we shall discuss later – has even matured the general strike and thereby opened a new epoch in the development of the labour movement” (Rosa Luxemburg, *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade-Unions*, cap.1, 1906).

“Who, therefore, speaks of the mass strike in Russia must, above all things, keep its history before his eyes. The present official period, so to speak, of the Russian Revolution is justly dated from the rising of the proletariat on January 22, 1905, when the demonstration of 200,000 workers ended in a frightful bloodbath before the czar's palace (...). But the St. Petersburg rising of January 22 was only the critical moment of a mass strike, which the proletariat of the czarist capital had previously entered upon in January 1905. The January mass strike was without doubt carried through under the immediate influence of the gigantic general strike, which in December 1904 broke out in the Caucasus. In Baku, and

for a long time kept the whole of Russia in suspense. The events of December in Baku were on their part only the last and powerful ramification of those tremendous mass strikes which, like a periodic earthquake, shook the whole of south Russia, and whose prologue was the mass strike in Batum in the Caucasus in March 1902. This first mass strike movement in the continuous series of present revolutionary eruptions is finally separated by five or six years from the great general strike of the textile workers in St. Petersburg in 1896 and 1897”.(idem, cap.3).

To reduce the “mass strike” to the only pre-revolutionary movements or even revolutionary ones that our class has developed and will develop, is a deep misunderstanding of what Rosa Luxemburg puts forwards and of the essential of the proletariat's fight in one period which is not counter-revolutionary (as it is the case presently since the working class struggle historical renewal of 1968). When in our text in the previous bulletin, [The Mass Strike today and tomorrow](#), we have dared to speak of “mass strike” for the fights under way “today”, we only have taken back very modestly the vision that Rosa Luxemburg has passed on to us. We can even say that the **present conditions** (the extent and the deepness of the crisis which attacks the whole capitalist world up until its very core ; its terrible implications on the working class which led to the pauperization of the masses ; the struggles of massive retort which spread all the planet...) give such an extent to the vision that even Rosa could not foresee. Actually, we see that what she described at the level of Russia itself, begins now to develop at the international scale : the last

months only enable us to see important struggles (for their extent, for their duration and for their anti-capitalist radicalism) developing simultaneously or taking over from one another, running across Europe from North to South, passing to the Southern side of the Mediterranean to come back to its Northern side, reaching as much the other continents with no zone really being spared. And, since the objective conditions cannot but, for the least, developing, the essential of this process of “mass strike” already under way is in front of us.

Contrary to those who could think that *Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade-Unions* is an old text, “not adapted” to what is occurring in our period, indeed even an “out-moded” text, we invite all the communists and militants to re-read it with cautious and to take back its lessons (and so for so many other texts) of the workers movement. Communists need constantly, and today more than ever, the lessons that our class has drawn of its experiences, thus of the writings of the great figures of marxism as Rosa Luxemburg in order to understand and intervene in the present situation.

All we put forwards here in regards to the development of the class struggle today does not mean that, for us, it is an “highway” which is before our class. If our fraction refuses to minimize and to ignore the workers' very strong anger and willingness to fight back which express today through the planet (and above all in the countries of capitalism's core), at the same time it is fully able to take into account the important weakness that the proletariat suffers presently at the level of its consciousness (difficulty to conceive itself as a class and temporary loss of sight of its historical perspective which notably manifests itself through the very weak influence in its ranks of the Communist Left...). This weakness is before all the result of the so-called “end of communism” which had followed stalinism's collapse. Nevertheless, we are sure there can't be any overcoming of this weakness without the development of the daily and wider and wider fight that the class leads against the effects of capitalist crisis. Here is **the** path ; that is what we are presently witnessing and that we must firstly and **without reluctance** support and encourage. As says Rosa : *"And it is a veritable ocean of frightful privations and sufferings which is brought by every revolution to the proletarian masses (...). And this awakening of class feeling expressed itself forthwith in the circumstances that the proletarian mass, counted by millions, quite suddenly and sharply came to realise how intolerable was that social and economic existence which they had patiently endured for decades in the chains of capitalism. Thereupon, there began a spontaneous general shaking of and tugging at these chains. All the innumerable sufferings of the modern proletariat reminded them of the old bleeding wounds."*

But the battle is still for the essential to be led. According to us, the process of “mass strike” is not but at its beginnings. This is not only due to the own present weaknesses of the class which has the huge historical

responsibility to “launch an assault to the sky”, but also and above all to the enormous pressure that the ruling class constantly exerts on it, physically, and especially ideologically. This pressure which had particularly developed in the period of capitalism's decadence, takes in the period we live an importance never reached before in humanity's history ; it reveals more and more clearly the total bankruptcy of capitalism and the bourgeoisie's inability to bring a solution. This is a ruling class on the brink of the abyss which is obliged to refine and use all the tools at its disposal to aim at disarming beforehand its executioner. For this purpose, there is the incredible development of huge ideological campaigns (“democratic” ones with all their “declensions”, anti-communism, etc...) whose main target is the proletariat and for this purpose there are too the multiplication of the obstacles it places **within** the very struggles themselves.

In regards with the last aspect (the bourgeois obstacles within the struggles), there is a conception of the class struggle that communists cannot share and that they have to fight back. It reveals itself in some kind of a **tendency** to underestimate, at least, the workers struggles in which the bourgeoisie's influence expresses itself (today, the presence or the control of the unions, the democratic illusions and others...) ; as if, to represent the interests and the concerns of the working class, the struggles had to be “**pure**”. Thus, these ones which are at some level influenced by the bourgeoisie's ideology or which are controlled by its political or unionist agents, should be ignored and even maybe to be rejected. To develop such a conception and to act according to it would imply to wait the “pure” struggle and so to reject the almost totality of the proletariat's fight. **In the marxist conception, there is no “pure” struggle** which, only, would deserve to be taken in consideration ; according to us, such a conception would be at the best borrowed to idealism, indeed to anarchism. The fight against the enemy class exists **up to within the struggles themselves**. The class affirmation does not only pass through its open opposition to exploitation that capitalism imposes, but also and inevitably through its fight to get rid of the presence and the influence, within the struggles, of the enemy class. That is what the historical experience has proved, above all in the period of decadence in which the bourgeoisie has developed State capitalism with its control over all the levels of society ; in particular towards the class which haunts it. It is not necessary here to display all the examples which prove it : but, at least, we can recall that, up to in “the form finally found of the power seizure” - the workers councils -, this fight has been led in 1905, in 1917, in Russia and in Germany ; that in their own ranks, the battle could be victorious in one case for our class, in the other one for the enemy. So let's get rid of this conception of “pure” struggle” since it does not enable to comprehend reality and above all it does not belong to the proletariat.

The FICL (June 8th, 2011)

INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

We publish here the statements we made after the catastrophic and dramatical consequences for the population of the earthquake and the tsunami that stroke Japan and whose responsible is not the "nature" but definitely the capitalist mode of production ; and after the massacres of populations in Libya provoked and kept going by the great imperialist powers which consciously let Gaddafi playing the role of bloody butcher.

Disaster in Japan : Capitalism destroys us Let's destroy Capitalism !

Already tens of thousands people are dead or have disappeared in Japan after the terrible earthquake and the gigantic tsunami. But tens of thousands, indeed millions of people, are whether already irradiated or are going to be so in the days to come by the bursts of explosions of the reactors of two nuclear power plants.

Japan is not a country of capitalism's periphery without "means". It is not Haiti. And, nevertheless, the horror happened.

Capitalism is the only responsible. Contrary to what the bourgeoisie keeps repeating by its "experts" and news media, this disaster is not natural ; that's all well and good the expression and the product of this system, today senile and bankrupted, which rules the whole planet.

First of all, the protections of the population against such a tsunami were largely insufficient. Nevertheless the scientists had warned a long time ago against such a seism and its dramatical consequences. But above all, what reason other than profit and international economical competition has the ruling class to build up nuclear power plants in a such a region ? And still worse, why did they not flood since the beginning the nuclear reactors in order to avoid their explosion and the contamination ? Quite simply because Japanese capitalism did not want to lose its reactors and has wanted to preserve them a any cost ! And don't tell us that these cynicism and barbarity belong only to Japanese capitalism. Any bourgeoisie would have done the same in order to attempt to save its "international competitiveness", even if it would have meant to sacrifice its population.

The historical dead-end of this society is obvious. The exacerbation of economical war due to the crisis does not but worsen capitalist cynicism and barbarity and prepares the whole society to generalized - and as well nuclear - war. Can someone have doubt about the bourgeoisie's cynicism when he looks at the Japanese disaster ? Can someone have doubt about its cynicism and about its conscious policy aiming at sacrificing the populations to the altar of its interests ? Is not it, at the very moment, letting the Lybian bourgeois State of Qaddafi bombing and repressing in bloodshed its own population in order to make an example and to make a warning to all the "peoples", particularly to the international proletariat, which are increasingly inclined to rise up and to get it over with misery and exploitation ?

The tens of thousands Japanese dead and the true terror in face of the nuclear explosions are the latter expression of a society which has nothing to offer to humanity but growing barbarity.

Capitalism destroys us

We must destroy capitalism, it is urgent !

An other society, without profit and without class, is to be built up

March 15th, 2011

La Fraction of the International Communist Left.

TEXTS OF THE WORKERS MOVEMENT

We publish in this bulletin two small historical texts. The first one by Bordiga in 1920 on the question of the seizure of power by the proletariat ; the second one by Lenin in 1911 on the Paris Commune. Both have in common to deal the same central question, the one of the revolutionary proletariat's relation to the State power whether it is the one of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism or the one of the transitional period in which the revolutionary class exerts its class dictatorship on the whole society. They also have in common the fact they respond to questions which already arise in the struggles we see springing up. Here is their "immediate" interest and the need to make them known and to draw political lessons from them.

*In front of the proletarian reactions at international scale, and more particularly around the Mediterranean Sea and in Europe, against capitalist crisis effects, the bourgeoisie leads a true ideological and political offensive on the theme of "Democracy". One of the consequences is that, amongst the participants of the present movements, such as the "indignados" and, unfortunately also amongst the revolutionaries, numerous are those who fail into the fetishism of the "general assemblies" seen as places of "true and exemplary democracy" and as panacea and aim of the fight against capitalism's crisis and its consequences. Bordiga's 1920 text was written at a time when the Italian proletariat was self-organizing in factory councils and was occupying these ones letting believing in the illusion of a workers victory without... direct and **political** confrontation with the capitalist State, without the destruction of this one and without seizure of **political** power. This is to this trap, amongst others, to which the text we reproduce, answers to. In that sense, it is of great actuality.*

By claiming the legacy of the Commune, by reaffirming that the "The cause of the Commune is the cause of the social revolution, the cause of the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers. It is the cause of the proletariat of the whole world. And in this sense it is immortal", Lenin's text comes to respond to an indispensable need and of some urgency : the coming back in the workers consciousness that another society is possible, that it does exist a revolutionary perspective in front this society of misery and barbarity. This more or less precise consciousness, more or less strong, has been violently and with success attacked by the anticommunist and democratic campaigns which has been unleashed after the collapse of the USSR and of stalinist State capitalism. It is basically the success of these ideological campaigns which explains for the essential the slowness of the workers struggles revival since 2001. Without this "consciousness", in the absence of this "idea of revolution", it means without revolutionary perspective more or less present in the workers masses, the immediate and daily struggles of the working class are inescapably defeated and reduced. Today when capitalism's bankruptcy openly explodes to the eyes of everyone, the return amongst the workers masses of the idea that another society is possible and necessary can't but favour the development of the present fights and the positive evolution of the relation of forces between the international proletariat and the whole bourgeoisie in relation to the massive classes confrontations which approach. In that sense, it is too of great actuality.

The FICL

Seize Power or Seize the Factory? (Bordiga's text, 1920)

The working-class disturbances of the past few days in Liguria have seen yet another example of a phenomenon that for some time now has been repeated with some frequency, and that deserves to be examined as a symptom of a new level of consciousness among the working masses.

Instead of abandoning their jobs, the workers have so to speak taken over their plants and sought to operate them for their own benefit, or more precisely without the top managers being present in the plant. Above all, this indicates that the workers are fully aware that the strike is not always the best weapon to use, especially under certain circumstances.

The economic strike, through the immediate harm it inflicts on the worker himself, derives its utility as a defensive weapon for the worker from the harm the work-stoppage inflicts on the industrialist by cutting back the output which belongs to him.

This is the state of affairs under normal conditions in the capitalist economy, when competition and price-cutting force a continual increase in production itself. Today the profiteers of industry, in particular the engineering industry, are emerging from an exceptional period in which they were able to amass enormous profits for a minimum of effort. During the war the State supplied them with raw materials and coal and, at the same time, acted as sole and reliable purchaser. Furthermore, through its militarization of factories, the State itself undertook to impose a rigorous discipline on the working masses. What more favourable conditions could there be for a fat profit? But now these people are no longer disposed to deal with all the difficulties arising from shortages of coal and raw materials, from the instability of the market and the fractiousness of the working masses. In particular, they are not disposed to put up with modest profits which are roughly the same or perhaps a bit below their pre-War level.

This is why they are not worried by strikes. Indeed they positively welcome them, while mouthing a few protests about the absurd claims and insatiability of the workers. The workers have understood this, and

through their action of taking over the factory and carrying on working instead of striking, they are making it clear that it is not that they have no wish to work, but that they have no wish to work the way the bosses tell them to. They no longer want to be exploited and work for the benefit of the bosses; they want to work for their own benefit, i.e. in the interests of the work-force alone.

This new consciousness that is emerging more clearly every day should be held in the highest regard; however, we would not want it to be led astray by vain illusions.

It is rumoured that factory councils, where they were in existence, functioned by taking over the management of the workshops and carrying on the work. We would not like the working masses to get hold of the idea that all they need do to take over the factories and get rid of the capitalists is set up councils. This would indeed be a dangerous illusion. The factory will be conquered by the working class – and not only by the workforce employed in it, which would be too weak and non-communist – only after the working class as a whole has seized political power. Unless it has done so, the Royal Guards, military police, etc. – in other words, the mechanism of force and oppression that the bourgeoisie has at its disposal, its political power apparatus – will see to it that all illusions are dispelled.

It would be better if these endless and useless adventures that are daily exhausting the working masses were all channelled, merged and organized into one great, comprehensive upsurge aimed directly at the heart of the enemy bourgeoisie.

Only a communist party should and would be able to carry out such an undertaking. At this time, such a party should and would have no other task than that of directing all its activity towards making the working masses increasingly conscious of the need for this grand political attack – the only more or less direct route to the take-over of the factory, which if any other route is taken may never fall into their hands at all.

Amadeo Bordiga. 1920

In Memory of the Commune (Lenin's text, 1911)

Forty years have passed since the proclamation of the Paris Commune. In accordance with tradition, the French workers paid homage to the memory of the men and women of the revolution of March 18, 1871, by meetings and demonstrations. At the end of May they will again place wreaths on the graves of the Communards who were shot, the victims of the terrible "May Week", and over their graves they will once more vow to fight untiringly until their ideas have triumphed and the cause they bequeathed has been fully achieved.

Why does the proletariat, not only in France but through out the entire world, honour the men and women of the Paris Commune as their predecessors? And what is the heritage of the Commune?

The Commune sprang up spontaneously. No one consciously prepared it in an organised way. The unsuccessful war with Germany, the privations suffered during the siege, the unemployment among the proletariat and the ruin among the lower middle classes; the indignation of the masses against the upper classes and against authorities who had displayed utter incompetence, the vague unrest among the working class, which was discontented with its lot and was striving for a different social system; the reactionary composition of the National Assembly, which roused apprehensions as to the fate of the republic—all this and many other factors combined to drive the population of Paris to revolution on March 18, which unexpectedly placed power in the hands of the National Guard, in the hands of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie which had sided with it.

It was an event unprecedented in history. Up to that time power had, as a rule, been in the hands of landowners and capitalists, i. e., in the hands of their trusted agents who made up the so-called government. After the revolution of March 18, when M. Thiers' government had fled from Paris with its troops, its police and its officials, the people became masters of the situation and power passed into the hands of the proletariat. But in modern society, the proletariat, economically enslaved by capital, cannot dominate politically unless it breaks the chains which fetter it to capital. That is why the movement of the Commune was bound to take on a socialist tinge, i. e., to strive to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, the rule of capital, and to destroy the very *foundations* of the contemporary social order.

At first this movement was extremely indefinite and confused. It was joined by patriots who hoped that the Commune would renew the war with the Germans and bring it to a successful conclusion. It enjoyed the support of the small shopkeepers who were threatened with ruin unless there was a postponement of payments on debts and rent (the government refused to grant this postponement, but they obtained it from the Commune). Finally, it enjoyed, at first, the sympathy of bourgeois republicans who feared that the reactionary National Assembly (the "rustics", the savage landlords) would restore the

monarchy. But it was of course the workers (especially the artisans of Paris), among whom active socialist propaganda had been carried on during the last years of the Second Empire and many of whom even belonged to the International, who played the principal part in this movement.

Only the workers remained loyal to the Commune to the end. The bourgeois republicans and the petty bourgeoisie soon broke away from it: the former were frightened off by the revolutionary-socialist, proletarian character of the movement; the latter broke away when they saw that it was doomed to inevitable defeat. Only the French proletarians supported *their* government fearlessly and untiringly, they alone fought and died for it—that is to say, for the cause of the emancipation of the working class, for a better future for all toilers.

Deserted by its former allies and left without support, the Commune was doomed to defeat. The entire bourgeoisie of France, all the landlords, stockbrokers, factory owners, all the robbers, great and small, all the exploiters joined forces against it. This bourgeois coalition, supported by Bismarck (who released a hundred thousand French prisoners of war to help crush revolutionary Paris), succeeded in rousing the ignorant peasants and the petty bourgeoisie of the provinces against the proletariat of Paris, and forming a ring of steel around half of Paris (the other half was besieged by the German army). In some of the larger cities in France (Marseilles, Lyons, St. Étienne, Dijon, etc.) the workers also attempted to seize power, to proclaim the Commune and come to the help of Paris; but these attempts were short-lived. Paris, which had first raised the banner of proletarian revolt, was left to its own resources and doomed to certain destruction.

Two conditions, at least, are necessary for a victorious social revolution—highly developed productive forces and a proletariat adequately prepared for it. But in 1871 both of these conditions were lacking. French capitalism was still poorly developed, and France was at that time mainly a petty-bourgeois country (artisans, peasants, shopkeepers, etc). On the other hand, there was no workers' party; the working class had not gone through a long school of struggle and was unprepared, and for the most part did not even clearly visualise its tasks and the methods of fulfilling them. There was no serious political organisation of the proletariat, nor were there strong trade unions and co-operative societies....

But the chief thing which the Commune lacked was time—an opportunity to take stock of the situation and to embark upon the fulfilment of its programme. It had scarcely had time to start work, when the government entrenched in Versailles and supported by the entire bourgeoisie began hostilities against Paris. The Commune had to concentrate primarily on self-defence. Right up to the very end, May 21-28, it had no time to think seriously of anything else.

However, in spite of these unfavourable conditions, in spite

of its brief existence, the Commune managed to promulgate a few measures which sufficiently characterise its real significance and aims. The Commune did away with the standing army, that blind weapon in the hands of the ruling classes, and armed the whole people. It proclaimed the separation of church and state, abolished state payments to religious bodies (i. e., state salaries for priests), made popular education purely secular, and in this way struck a severe blow at the gendarmes in cassocks. In the purely social sphere the Commune accomplished very little, but this little nevertheless clearly reveals its character as a popular, workers' government. Night-work in bakeries was forbidden; the system of fines, which represented legalised robbery of the workers, was abolished. Finally, there was the famous decree that all factories and workshops abandoned or shut down by their owners were to be turned over to associations of workers that were to resume production. And, as if to emphasise its character as a truly democratic, proletarian government, the Commune decreed that the salaries of all administrative and government officials, irrespective of rank, should not exceed the normal wages of a worker, and in no case amount to more than 6,000 francs a year (less than 200 rubles a month).

All these measures showed clearly enough that the Commune was a deadly menace to the old world founded on the enslavement and exploitation of the people. That was why bourgeois society could not feel at ease so long as the Red Flag of the proletariat waved over the *Hotel de Ville* in Paris. And when the organised forces of the government finally succeeded in gaining the upper hand over the poorly organised forces of the revolution, the Bonapartist generals, who had been beaten by the Germans and who showed courage only in fighting their defeated countrymen, those French *Rennenkämpfers* and *Meller-Zakomelskys*, organised such a slaughter as Paris had never known. About 30,000 Parisians were shot down by the bestial soldiery, and about 45,000 were arrested, many of whom were afterwards executed, while thousands were transported or exiled. In all, Paris lost about 100,000 of its best people, including some of the finest workers in all trades.

The bourgeoisie were satisfied. "Now we have finished with socialism for a long time," said their leader, the blood

thirsty dwarf, Thiers, after he and his generals had drowned the proletariat of Paris in blood. But these bourgeois crows croaked in vain. Less than six years after the suppression of the Commune, when many of its champions were still pining in prison or in exile, a new working-class movement arose in France. A new socialist generation, enriched by the experience of their predecessors and no whit discouraged by their defeat, picked up the flag which had fallen from the hands of the fighters in the cause of the Commune and bore it boldly and confidently forward. Their battle-cry was: "Long live the social revolution! Long live the Commune!" And in another few years, the new workers' party and the agitational work launched by it throughout the country compelled the ruling classes to release Communards who were still kept in prison by the government.

The memory of the fighters of the Commune is honoured not only by the workers of France but by the proletariat of the whole world. For the Commune fought, not for some local or narrow national aim, but for the emancipation of all toiling humanity, of all the downtrodden and oppressed. As a foremost fighter for the social revolution, the Commune has won sympathy wherever there is a proletariat suffering and engaged in struggle. The epic of its life and death, the sight of a workers' government which seized the capital of the world and held it for over two months, the spectacle of the heroic struggle of the proletariat and the torments it underwent after its defeat—all this raised the spirit of millions of workers, aroused their hopes and enlisted their sympathy for the cause of socialism. The thunder of the cannon in Paris awakened the most backward sections of the proletariat from their deep slumber, and everywhere gave impetus to the growth of revolutionary socialist propaganda. That is why the cause of the Commune is not dead. It lives to the present day in every one of us.

The cause of the Commune is the cause of the social revolution, the cause of the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers. It is the cause of the proletariat of the whole world. And in this sense it is immortal.

Lenin, 1911