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Print edition €4,-
Saturday, April 27, 2019

Dear reader,

In this issue we have the occasion to present texts and articles that document the promising construction of a new organization of the communist Left, the group Emancipación in Spain. ‘Nuevo Curso’, from whom we have regularly translated articles on issues of actuality, henceforth continues as the journal of Emancipación.

We pursue the nascent discussion among proletarian internationalists on the character and significance of the ‘yellow vests’ movement in France with three contributions of a somewhat polemic character.

The section Documents of the historical Communist Left presents two fundamental texts on the national and colonial questions by the Gauche Communiste de France (GCF), conceived in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

An article by ‘Nuevo Curso’ on the mass protests in Algeria has been selected to highlight an important evolution of the international situation: the resurgence of mass movements, in particular in the Maghreb countries, 6 years after the defeat of the ‘Arab Spring’. More contributions about the evolution of the international situation (including the situation in North Africa) are envisaged for the web blog.

Overview listings of two specific long term translation and publishing projects have been included: The translations of texts from the German-Dutch communist Left that have appeared in this revue, and the recent translations by the CWO from the revue ‘Kommunist’ (1918), organ of the first fraction of the historical communist Left in Russia.

The presentation of our Selected Articles & News Feeds henceforth includes brief extracts from the items listed.

With this issue A Free Retriever’s Digest has entered its third year as a publication at a more or less regular frequency; its web blog has seen its first anniversary. We thank our collaborators for their contributions and invite our readers to send in their appreciations of this project.

Internationalist regards,

Henry Cinnamon

P.S. Due to several reasons, among which the rapid succession of events and changes at the international level, this issue appears with a considerable delay. It may be necessary to lower the ‘Digest’s’ frequency in order to be able to produce some envisaged material of due quality in forthcoming releases.

A Free Retriever’s Digest aims at presenting publications that are relevant for discussions within the internationalist milieu in general, and among the groups and circles who claim adherence to the international communist left(s) in particular. It intends to provide comments and a space for discussion.

Readers are invited to send in notifications of publications by e-mail, abstracts and reviews of relevant books, articles or texts, and presentations at discussion meetings. Contributions should be written in English and may not exceed 3,000 words. Included bibliographical references and internet links should be exact.

Articles and contributions express the views of their authors. Publication is at the discretion of the editor. They may be freely adopted if correctly quoted with source reference. A notification thereof is highly appreciated.

Web blog: https://afreeretriever.wordpress.com. E-mail address: afreeretriever@gmail.com.
**Selected Articles & News Feeds**

January 28 – April 14, 2019 (week no.’s 04 - 14)

**Maghreb: Regional warfare, imperialist maneuvers and popular movements**

*The mass protests in Algeria; The war in Libya, Strike movement in Morocco*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algérie : les manifestations de masse peuvent ébranler le clan Bouteflika</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published on:</td>
<td>March 3, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s):</td>
<td>PCInt (Le Prolétaire)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web link:</td>
<td><a href="http://pcint.org/01_Positions/01_01_fr/190303_algerie.htm">http://pcint.org/01_Positions/01_01_fr/190303_algerie.htm</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Leaflet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (words):</td>
<td>2,114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extract:</td>
<td>&quot;For the past ten days or so, Algeria has been the scene of mass demonstrations of an unprecedented scale. On Friday, March 1st, according to police estimates, nearly 800,000 people demonstrated in Algiers and tens of thousands in other cities. The demonstrators are protesting against Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth presidential term.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La crisis argelina</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published on:</td>
<td>March 4, 2019</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s):</td>
<td>Nuevo Curso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web link:</td>
<td><a href="https://nuevocurso.org/la-crisis-argelina/">https://nuevocurso.org/la-crisis-argelina/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>The mass protests in Algeria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre:</td>
<td>Analysis and perspectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (words):</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extract:</td>
<td>&quot;With a country in general uproar, Bouteflika waited until the last moment to present his presidential candidacy. The demonstrators are still on the warpath because they know that the official candidacy wins. But why should the fossilized Algerian bourgeoisie impose on a dying Bouteflika who survives on medical care in Geneva?&quot; Note: An English translation can be read on page 36.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algérie</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published on:</td>
<td>March 29, 2019</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s):</td>
<td>Le Fil Rouge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Web link:</td>
<td><a href="https://lefilrouge17.blogspot.com/2019/03/algerie.html">https://lefilrouge17.blogspot.com/2019/03/algerie.html</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Statement of position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (words):</td>
<td>1,203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extract:</td>
<td>&quot;Algeria is currently experiencing an exceptional moment. Millions and millions of people march through the streets, carrying the slogan: abdicate! Already since February 22nd. Certainly Algeria needs change, it even needs a revolution, but can the intelligentsia, if we can use this term, guide and lead to change today? Nothing is less certain, on the contrary, among the people who can be considered sincere there are none who pose the real problems facing the country and propose solutions other than legal, constitutional, formal, etc.&quot;</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algérie: Seule la lutte prolétarienne peut faire dégager le système capitaliste!</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published on:</td>
<td>April 1, 2019</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s):</td>
<td>PCInt (Le Prolétaire)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Web link:</td>
<td><a href="http://pcint.org/01_Positions/01_01_fr/190401_algerie-tournant.htm">http://pcint.org/01_Positions/01_01_fr/190401_algerie-tournant.htm</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Statement of position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (words):</td>
<td>2,496</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
"After more than a month of demonstrations, mobilizations and strikes against Bouteflika's candidacy - even though he is impotent - for a fifth presidential term, the government was forced to back down. [...] the depth of the current political crisis is such that half-measures and contortions of power turn empty. The ever-increasing number of demonstrators going out to Algerian cities on 29 March responded to Gaïd Salah's statement by reiterating their demand to put an end not to one individual in particular, but to the "system" as a whole - of which Gaïd is one of the pillars!"

Grève des enseignants contractuels au Maroc : solidarité de classe !

挤压 actors' 屈服 's school teachers contract in Morocco : class solidarity !

Extract:

"For more than five months, Moroccan contract teachers have been fighting hard. At the beginning of March, they led a one-week strike. It was massively followed throughout the country."

Title: Algeria: with or without Bouteflika, it's always the bourgeoisie that wins elections

Published on: April 5, 2019
Author(s): Raymond, March 13, 2019
Web link: https://en.internationalism.org/content/16659/algeria-or-without-bouteflika-its-always-bourgeoisie-wins-elections
Subject: Article
Genre: Statement of position
Length (words): 1,259
Extract:

"After waves of popular protests flooding the streets of Algiers, Oran or Constantine, demanding the resignation of president Bouteflika and his clique, the former president seems to have finally given in to the pressure of his "people"."

¿Quién está detrás de Haftar?

挤压 actors' 屈服 's Haftar behind who is

Extract:

"What is behind the intensification of the war in Libya? Are all the powers really disconcerted, as they declare, by the advance of Haftar's troops towards Tripoli? Is it a civil war or a new resurgence of imperialist war? Note: An English translation is forthcoming on AFRD's web blog."

Libya: A War as Long as a Pipeline

Published on: April 16, 2019
Author(s): FD (Battaglia Comunista), April 8, 2019
Subject: Blog article
Genre: Statement of position
Length (words): 1,443
Extract:

"Since 2011 Libya has been living with a continual war between internal factions, tribal struggles and the arrogant presence of all, or almost all, of the greatest imperialist powers in Europe and beyond."
### South America & the Caribbean

#### The inter-imperialist stand-off over Venezuela (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Caribbean: The &quot;Isla&quot; oil refinery as a microcosm of a collapsing capitalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published on:</td>
<td>February 12, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s):</td>
<td>Fredo Corvo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web link:</td>
<td><a href="https://libcom.org/blog/caribbean-Island-oil-refinery-microcosm-collapsing-capitalism-12022019">https://libcom.org/blog/caribbean-Island-oil-refinery-microcosm-collapsing-capitalism-12022019</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Blog article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (words):</td>
<td>1,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extract:</td>
<td>&quot;On the Caribbean Island of Curacao refinery workers strike against the closure of their enterprise under influence of the economic, political and human tragedy in Venezuela and the danger of inter-imperialist war.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Crisis in Venezuela: Neither Guaidó nor Maduro! The Workers Must Not Support any of the Rival Bourgeois Factions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published on:</td>
<td>February 19, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s):</td>
<td>ICC, Feb. 12, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Statement of position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (words):</td>
<td>3,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extract:</td>
<td>&quot;The confrontation between the bourgeois factions in Venezuela - between Chavismo and the opposition parties - has undergone a qualitative leap since the beginning of 2019. It takes place in a context of an unprecedented worsening of the economic and social crisis, the most evident sign of which is the increase in poverty experienced by a large part of the population. But it is also part of a scenario marked by worsening rivalries between the great powers - some giving their open support to the regime of Nicolás Maduro, others to the proclaimed interim president Juan Guaidó.&quot;</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Brazil in Torment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published on:</td>
<td>March 10, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s):</td>
<td>Revolução Internacional, 6 February 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web link:</td>
<td><a href="https://en.internationalism.org/content/16647/brazil-torment">https://en.internationalism.org/content/16647/brazil-torment</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Brazil after the taking of power by Bolsonaro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genre:</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length (words):</td>
<td>7,391</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extract:</td>
<td>&quot;Brazil is wracked by increased repression, growing poverty and greater insecurity; further attacks on workers, threats of war and risks of chaos - all linked to the new president, Jair Bolsonaro, who took office on 1 January, 2019. Bolsonaro symbolises the epoch in which we are living which produces the most sinister and repugnant elements. It is a law that we can be sure will be verified, whatever the political moves of the new president and his ministries, whatever his personality ... that the exploited will pay more than their predecessors and the crisis of capitalism will only get worse.&quot;</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Workers’ Struggles in Mexico

#### The Maquiladoras strikes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>International Solidarity with the Wildcat Strikes of the Mexican Maquiladoras</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published on:</td>
<td>February 24, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s):</td>
<td>ICT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Appeal for international solidarity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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A Free Retriever’s Digest

Genre: Joint declaration
Length (words): 1,736
Remarks: Signed by: Klasbatalo (Canada), Internationalist Communists Oceania, Los Angeles Internationalist Communists (US) & Internationalist Communist Tendency

2 Title: Mexico: Metalworkers, universities join strike wave as 90,000 Walmart workers threaten to walk out
Published on: February 28, 2019
Author(s): A. Lobo, WSWS (trotskyist)
Subject: Strike wave in Mexico
Genre: Article
Length (words): 1,596
Extract: “Dozens of maquiladora plants that agreed to the "20-32"—a 20 percent raise and a bonus of 32,000 pesos (US$1,700)—demanded by workers in Matamoros, Mexico, are escalating their reprisals against the historic wave of strikes that began in the city on January 12. This has included thousands of firings.”

3 Title: ¿Sindicalistas o revolucionarios? (Spanish)
Published on: March 19, 2019
Author(s): Nuevo Curso
Web link: https://nuevocurso.org/sindicalistas-o-revolucionarios/
Subject: Basis Syndicalism
Genre: Blog article
Length (words): 2,295
Extract: “In Spain, in Mexico, in Argentina... in Iran, everywhere we are seeing what superficially looks like a rebirth of "grassroots" unionism, accompanying the resurgence of class struggles and strikes. Many times, not always, dressed as a return to "revolutionary unionism" or anarcho-syndicalism. What does it mean? Where does it go?”

4 Title: Lessons of the Matamoros workers’ rebellion: Part 1 & 2
Published on: 03/25/2019; 03/29/2019
Author(s): A. Lobo, WSWS (trotskyist)
Subject: The strikes in the Mexican ‘maquiladoras’ industries
Genre: Report
Length (words): 3,070 resp. 3,357
Remarks: An English translation is forthcoming on AFRD’s web blog.

5 Title: Sindicatos e izquierda contra la huelga de masas en México (Spanish)
Published on: April 9, 2019
Author(s): Nuevo Curso
Web link: https://nuevocurso.org/sindicatos-e-izquierda-contra-la-huelga-de-masas-en-mexico/
Subject: Trade unions and the left against the mass strike in Mexico
Genre: Synthesis by a group of comrades in Mexico
Length (words): 1,965
Extract: "The development of "wild" and mass strikes in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, is the most important class struggle in the Americas in years. We have followed it as closely as we could on our news channels but only broadly in our daily newspaper. We now publish a summary of the latest events sent to us by a group of comrades from Matamoros born out of the need to draw lessons from the heat of the struggles." Note: An English translation is forthcoming on AFRD’s web blog.
Workers' Struggles in Europe

A ‘general strike’ in Belgium; Car industry: which lessons from the Opel strike in 2004?

1 Title: Belgique: Après le succès de la grève générale, les syndicats abandonnent les revendications à la table des négociations
Published on: March 3, 2019
Author(s): PCInt (Le Prolétaire)
Web link: http://pcint.org/01_Positions/01_01_fr/190303_belgique-greve-generale.htm
Subject: Genre: Length (words): Extract:
Statement of position 2,097
“On February 13, Belgium experienced a major general strike. Following the attempts at negotiations between trade union bureaucracies and employers’ organisations, the common trade union front claimed to reject the very small margin for wage increases and the excessive flexibility proposed by the capitalists. As well as the employer’s refusal to discuss the conditions of end-of-career jobs or early retirement.”

2 Title: [Funke vom Februar 2019] Unsere Chance: Streik statt Streikbruch
Published on: March 5, 2019
Author(s): LabourNet Germany
Subject: Genre: Length (words): Extract:
Mobilization in the German automotive sector Notification 701
Leaflet from February 2019, “by workers for workers at Mercedes, suppliers and logistics Bremen - with a good overview of current job cuts not only in the automotive industry. In it also: “What’s the point of the time account?” , “Equal rights for all” and the call for May 1, 2019.”

3 Title: Filmkritik: „Luft zum Atmen“ - Opel Bochum und die linke Legendenbildung
Published on: March 14, 2019
Author(s): R. Schlosser
Web link: https://kosmoprolet.org/de/filmkritik-luft-zum-atmen-opel-bochum-und-die-linke-legendenbildung
Subject: Genre: Length (words): Extract:
Workers' struggle at Opel Bochum and left-wing legend construction Film critique 3,220
“The documentary film "Luft zum Atmen - 40 Jahre Opposition bei Opel Bochum" tells a rather unusual story by German standards. Former activists of the company group "Gegenwehr ohne Grenzen" (GOG), which began in the early 1970s as a "group of opposition trade unionists", flew out of the IG Metall quite quickly and then tried as an independent club to consistently represent their interests, to have their say.”

4 Title: “Air to breathe” – 40 years of trade union opposition at Opel/General Motors car plant in Bochum, Germany
Published on: April 4, 2019
Author(s): Angry Workers
Subject: Genre: Length (words): Extract:
Militant syndicalism at Opel Bochum (Germany) Documentary and Meeting announcement 756
“Labournet.tv and AngryWorkers proudly present the first UK screening of a new documentary on workers' organising at one of the most militant car factories in Germany.” Film trailer and introduction: Luft zum Atmen - Trailer I labournet.tv (Film release 2 Mai 2019)

5 Title: [Funke vom April 2019] Statt Tod auf Raten: Den Streik vorbereiten – JETZT!
Published on: April 5, 2019
Author(s):
Web link: 
Subject: Genre: Length (words): Extract:


A Free Retriever's Digest

1. Title: Fairy Tales About Climate Change
   Published on: March 7, 2019
   Author(s): José A. Tapia
   Web link: https://brooklynrail.org/2019/03/field-notes/Fairy-Tales-About-Climate-Change
   Subject: Demystifying the economic origins of the climate catastrophe; the close relationship between the emission of greenhouse gases and the economic conjuncture.
   Genre: Article
   Length (words): 6,259
   Extract: "Economists continue to tell fairy tales that justify the world as it is and reject any criticism or project that conflicts with the social and economic foundations of capitalism, our cherished free enterprise system. Nothing illustrates this better than a recent publication on climate change by economists of the International Monetary Fund."

2. Title: Grève mondiale pour le climat : Se mobiliser pour Sauve le climat ou lutter pour renverser le capitalisme?
   Published on: March 13, 2019
   Author(s): PCInt (Le Prolétaire)
   Web link: http://pcint.org/01_Positions/01_01_fr/190313_greve-climat.htm
   Subject: School strikes and demonstrations for the Paris Climate Agreement
   Genre: Statement
   Length (words): 3,012
   Extract: "In recent months, a number of countries have witnessed a mobilization of young people on the issue of global warming. A 15-year-old Swedish girl, Greta Thunberg, was the initiator of student strikes and "climate" demonstrations on Fridays in front of Parliament in Stockholm. (...) Following the mobilizations in these countries and elsewhere, a "global climate strike" was announced by "Youth for Climate", the association to which Thunberg belongs, on 15 March. What should we think of these mobilizations?"

3. Title: Facing The Heat
   Published on: April 2019
   Author(s): Peter St. Clair
   Web link: https://brooklynrail.org/2019/04/field-notes/Facing-The-Heat

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Capitalism, Climate Change & ecological Disasters

**Climate Change: Scientific assessments; ‘Fridays for Future’**

1. Title: Fairy Tales About Climate Change
   Published on: March 7, 2019
   Author(s): José A. Tapia
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   Subject: Demystifying the economic origins of the climate catastrophe; the close relationship between the emission of greenhouse gases and the economic conjuncture.
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3. Title: Facing The Heat
   Published on: April 2019
   Author(s): Peter St. Clair
   Web link: https://brooklynrail.org/2019/04/field-notes/Facing-The-Heat
Subject: In face of catastrophic climate change scenario's, the author argues for the need to end the "fossil fuel economy" of capitalism in favor of a "sustainable socialism".
Genre: Argument
Length (words): 5,545
Extract: "In all the long duration of human history, from the ancient sacred crypts of Egypt to the glistening towers of our coastal megapolesises, there has never been a crisis as severe, as devastating, or as cataclysmic as the one unfolding now. Unless drastic changes are made in very short order to the human social system that encompasses the planet, dire and frightening transformations that cannot be reversed will develop in the Earth's climate, its ocean, and its biosphere."

Social Revolt in Europe: The “Yellow Vests” Movement in France (III)
Discussion and polemic in the internationalist milieu

1 Title: Lenin and... the Yellow Vests in France ?
Published on: February 17, 2019
Author(s): Revolution or War
Web link: http://igcl.org/Lenin-and-the-Yellow-Vests-in
Subject: Lenin on the role of communists in popular democratic movements
Genre: Historical reference
Length (words): 759
Extract: "The unheard of character of the yellow vest movement in France has raised many questions among revolutionaries because of its own characteristics, which we can describe, in short, as interclasiast. We have received a number of criticisms following our publication and our support for the first position paper of the ICP – Proletarian. Among these, the comrades of the group Matière et Révolution (France) referred us to Lenin’s text on the 1916 debate on the right of nations to self-determination."

2 Title: Class War 09/2019: "Yellow vests"
Published on: February 26, 2019
Author(s): Třídní válka (Class War)
Web link: https://www.autistici.org/tridnivalka/class-war-09-2019-yellow-vests/
Subject: The 'yellow vests' as a proletarian movement
Genre: Polemic; Documents
Length (words): 6,604
Extract: "We published recently on our blog (...) some documents produced by and around the "yellow vest" movement that has been shaking France since several weeks. The following is a kind of introduction to all of them (...) What we would like to deal with here is the way how we approach this movement, how we analyze it, how we evaluate its importance in the framework of class struggle. And we don't want to hide that various articles spitting on this movement produced and reproduced by too many groups of ultra-left were a (negative) inspiration for this contribution that we can intimately call: ‘What’s NOT to be done’.

3 Title: R.G. au pays des Gilets jaunes
Published on: March 15, 2019
Author(s): Pantopolis
Subject: On a Bordigist perspective on the yellow vests
Genre: Polemic
Length (words): 2,062
Remarks: An English translation can be read on page 27. A critique is included in the press review on page 30.

4 Title: Assez de simulacres de luttes ! Place à la lutte de classe ouverte contre Macron et le capitalisme !
Published on: March 17, 2019
Author(s): PCInt (Le Prolétairre)
Web link: http://www.pcint.org/01_Positions/01_01_fr/190317_lutte-classe-proletarienne.htm
"Whither America?"; Foundation of the Third International (1919); The world commune; The historical course

1 Title: Introduction to "Whither America?" Discussion
Published on: February 24, 2019
Author(s): Insurgent Notes (Editors)
Web link: http://insurgentnotes.com/2019/02/introduction-to-whither-america-discussion/
Subject: Class and Politics in the Era of American Decline
Genre: Editorial introduction
Length (words): 956
Remarks: Insurgent Notes No. 19 (February 2019): Special Issue on "Whither America?": An Essay by Floris D'Aalst, with 7 responses and a reply by the author.

2 Title: Founding of the Comintern - Then and Now
Published on: February 28, 2019
Author(s): ICT
Subject: Significance of the First Congress of the Third International (March 1919)
Genre: Summary article
Length (words): 3,841
Extract: "A century ago, from 2nd – 6th March 1919, 52 delegates, more than 40 from various political organisations outside Russia, met in Moscow. During those five days the meeting became the First Congress of the Third International (...) That event marked a key point in the development of revolutionary proletarian organisation. The Congress took place at the moment in history where the proletariat had made its biggest challenge, before or since, to the capitalist order." Note: For a lively exchange with certain 'libertarian communists' see the ICT's blog page on libcom. Public Meeting announcement on page Error: Reference source not found.

3 Title: Die Umrisse der Weltcommune und ihre Kritik
Published on: March 17, 2019
Author(s): Kosmoprolet
Web link: https://kosmoprolet.org/de/die-umrisse-der-weltcommune-und-ihrer-kritik-0
Subject: Period of Transition; the law of value and the "work vouchers" (Debate)
Genre: List of 7 replies (with links to the respective texts).
Length (words): 586
Remarks: Primary contribution: Umrisse der Weltcommune ("Outlines of the world commune", March 21, 2018)

4 Title: An Initial Response to the Comrades of the IGCL
Published on: March 18, 2019
Author(s): ICT
Subject: The relations of force and the historical course
Genre: Reply
Length (words): 7,200
"We are publishing the answer to the critical remarks that the comrades of the International Group of the Communist Left made on our article "A Decade After the Financial Crash" (Revolutionary Perspectives 13)." Note: the IGCL’s critique "The Question of the "Historical Course", the Dynamics of the Workers’ Struggles and... the Role of the Party (January 2019) can also be found in Revolution or War No. 11 (February 2019)

Documents and Historiography

1 Title: The Rise and Fall of Unionism in the United States
Published on: March 2, 2019
Author(s): Workers' Offensive
Web link: https://www.workersoffensive.org/single-post/2019/03/02/The-Rise-and-Fall-of-Unionism-in-the-United-States
Subject: History of American socialism and the legacy of Daniel de León
Genre: History of the workers' movement; Unionism; USA
Length (words): 5,484
Remarks: Second part of a series written in collaboration with 'Nuevo Curso'

2 Title: Willy Huhn: Zur Lehre von der revolutionären Partei
Published on: March 30, 2019
Author(s): Willy Huhn
Subject: Conceptions of the party; Marx versus Lenin
Genre: Historic-critical assessment
Length (words): 10,160

3 Title: Die Bayerische „Räterepublik“
Published on: April 11, 2019
Author(s): Nelke (Soziale Befreiung)
Web link: http://sbefreiung.blogsport.de/2019/04/11/die-bayerische-raeterepublik/
Subject: The "Council Republic" in Bavaria.
Genre: Chapter from the pamphlet "The revolutionary post-war crisis in Germany" (2014).
Length (words): 2,504

Miscellaneous Topics

Amazon's business model; NSU (Germany); New releases of Intransigence; Le Fil Rouge; GIS

1 Title: Amazon: a new business model better able to manage the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production
Published on: March 6, 2019
Author(s): Mouvement Communiste / KpK, January 19, 2019
Subject: Precarious labor and capital accumulation
Genre: Analysis of responses to capital’s accumulation crisis
Extract: "Amazon constitutes a particularly interesting case study in capitalist development. This enterprise on a colossal scale, whose sphere of activity is the whole world, leader in its market, is one of the most important in the present period in terms of valorisation. It is part of what is called GAFAM: the five big American companies, "giants of the web", along with Google, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft. Amazon has managed to integrate on a high level the flexibility of labour and various productive pro-
cesses, involving its own internal workforce as well as numerous sub-contractors. This allows it to skilfully combine the concentration and centralisation of its capital."

2 Title: **Intransigence #4, March 2019**
Published on: March 26, 2019
Author(s): Intransigence
[https://intransigence.org/category/issue-4/](https://intransigence.org/category/issue-4/)
Subject: "I was. I am. I shall be" (Editorial)
Genre: Presentation of the issue's contents
Length (words): 1,703
Remarks: Collaboration effort of four internationalist groups in the USA

3 Title: **NSU 2.0**
Published on: April 7, 2019
Author(s): Wildcat (From #103)
Web link: [https://www.wildcat-ww.de/wildcat/103/w103_nsu.html](https://www.wildcat-ww.de/wildcat/103/w103_nsu.html)
Subject: Right-wing extremism and its collusion with the bourgeois state (Germany)
Genre: Article
Length (words): 4,445
Extract: "The NSU murders aren't forgotten yet. On April 4, several hundred people in Dortmund commemorated Mehmet Kubasik, who was murdered twelve years ago, with a demonstration. After the failed (legal) clarification, many questions still remain unanswered. This is especially true of the involvement of government agencies in this complex."

4 Title: **Le fil rouge n.5 2019**
Published on: April 24, 2019
Author(s): Le Fil Rouge
Subject: Thematic issue: Robot and Finance
Genre: Table of Contents and web links
Length (words): 116
Remarks: With 4 texts translated from "Programme Communiste" (Bordigist)
Extract: (Presentation) "This issue (…) is dedicated to the relationship between production robotization and financialization of the economy. (…) Capitalism generates a volcanic eruption of production that floods the planet with commodities thanks to the extension of robotics and the swelling of the financial market, phenomena specific to its imperialist phase. On the social level, the most important consequences are the trend in increase of the industrial reserve army (unemployment), the relative increase of the proletarians without reserves, and a slow but increasingly aggressive proletarianization of the middle classes. The purpose of this issue (…) is to show the internal contradictions of the system itself: the obstacles posed to the socialization of production by the old production relations defended by the bourgeoisie party and its state."

5 Title: **Krise, Krieg und Umweltkatastrophen: Es gibt keine Alternative zur sozialen Revolution!**
Published on: April 25, 2019
Author(s): GIS (ICT)
Subject: Capitalism at a dead end and the perspective of a proletarian alternative; a call for internationalist regroupment
Genre: ICT Leaflet
Length (words): 2,903
Remarks: Germinal #16, May 1st publication (2 p. A3)
Resolution on nationalist movements (1945)

The Conference, with the unanimity of the comrades, affirms as an unalterable position of principle for communists in the face of the national and colonial movements that are emerging and can emerge in the era of the decadence of capitalism:

1) Any national movement led by or against the existing government is in its class character anti-proletarian and counter-revolutionary.

2) The participation of a more or less large part of the proletariat in this movement does not change its class nature.

3) The national movements have their foundation in the interest of the bourgeoisie or a fraction of the bourgeoisie of a country facing the economic and political domination of another imperialist bourgeoisie and, in the current historical period, allow the bourgeoisie to hide from the proletariat the general and insurmountable crisis in which society finds itself.

4) The imperialist occupation and domination, generating in the proletariat of the occupied countries a deep discontent on the basis of increased exploitation and oppression pushed to the extreme, offer the national bourgeoisie the means to exploit this popular discontent by influencing it with a nationalist and chauvinist ideology with the help of which the bourgeoisie diverts the proletariat from its class territory and even leads it into imperialist war.

5) The class position of the proletariat can only be the abandonment and separation from the whole national movement and the fiercest fight against chauvinism.

From the fact that the nationalist movements, because of their class nature as capitalist, have no organic and ideological continuity with the class movements of the proletariat, therefore the proletariat, in order to rejoin its class positions, must break and abandon all links with the nationalist movements.

‘Internationalisme’ (Gauche Communiste de France)
N° 1, January 1945

Source: Résolution sur les mouvements nationalistes http://igcl.org/internationalisme/fra/i01/i01_7.html
Translation: H.C., April 4, 2019. Final version: April 19, 2019
The national and colonial problem (1946)

The "national question": A theoretical point of view

The bourgeois revolution and the idea of nation

The national problem is linked to the bourgeois revolution. The idea of nation developed and grew throughout the period of the bourgeois revolution which, beginning with the Reformation, went as far as the development of the Big Monopolizing Capitalism. During the first period of the bourgeois revolution, the English Revolution of the 17th Century and the French Revolution of the 18th Century, the most radical movements of the most exploited social strata, or [of those] whose political rights were not yet recognized, (1) in reality had to push the bourgeois revolution to a stage the bourgeoisie would not have been capable to rise at by itself.

Thus the "Diggers" were the revolutionary movement of the soldiers of Cromwell's army, a radical movement that, by disappearing, made the Lilburn "Levelers" movement disappear with it.

The movement had enabled the Cromwell dictatorship to consolidate itself by curbing the most radical revolutionary tendencies and consolidating, in the eyes of other classes of society, the power of the State and the need for the continuation of that power for a given time.

The same was true for the Terror. Pushed against their will by the Enragés and subsequently by the Hébertists, the Jacobins inaugurated it by suppressing its most audacious supporters. Cromwell's dictatorship over the Croupion Parliament, that of Robespierre and the Public Salvation Committee would disappear and give way to "reaction" once their mission was accomplished. In effect, their passage would simultaneously mark an internal centralizing mission and the struggle for the recognition of the achievements of the Revolution by other nations externally.

The whole movement remains national and patriotic; however radical it may be, it is devoted to this merciless scheme of bourgeois revolution, namely the crushing of the most radical layers once the revolution has been accomplished.

In the ascending period of capitalism, even when revolutionary tremors constitute a social earthquake with international repercussions, the revolutionary proletariat is doomed to be crushed. Such were the June days of 1848 in France, such was the constitutional campaign [of 1848 – 49] in Germany. This was also the case with the Paris Commune of 1871. Effectively, it is on its corpses that the Third Republic of sad memory was built. Until then, they [the revolutionary tremors] ] only appear as a radicalization of movements in the different layers of the bourgeoisie and ultimately only benefit the latter. However, as has so often been said and written, they are “the locomotive of history”, constantly pushing history to its superior stage.

The capitalist contradictions

Effectively, if the bourgeois revolution economically destroyed the remnants of feudalism, which was an obstacle to the development of capitalism, and if its role at that time consisted mainly in centralizing at the national level and breaking provincialism, in founding banks and [standardizing] money to promote the development of trade, in unifying weights and measures, etc., today we are faced with a completely different aspect of the problem and, for the bourgeoisie itself, nationalism and patriotism are no more than a facade.

Under the ideological veil of patriotism, [the bourgeois revolution] serves to mobilize the exploited masses behind the interests of the capitalist state for the latter’s defense.

It is through the “Sacred Union”, through the “Union of all for the defense of the interests of all”, under the tricolor rags that this popular brainwashing is carried out.

This is only the simplest and the most simplistic aspect of the national problem in the current period. Apart from this traditional national question, which always serves the bourgeoisie like all counter-revolutionary ideologies: nationalist, anti-Semite, religious and secular, Stakhanovite and others, there is another aspect of the problem that is much more complex and that takes us to the very heart of the present situation.

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1) Such were the "Levelers" movements led by Lilburn in the Cromwell Revolution, misnamed as such but forming a conglomerate of all kinds of petty-bourgeois, peasant, Jewish and including the soldiers movement, "diggers", as well as the Enragés and Hébertists movement in the French Revolution.
In the present period, the national question must therefore be considered in the light of the objectively existing conditions. The different Nations subsist as the apparatus of the bourgeois state because the Nation is the social milieu necessary to mobilize all classes around the interests of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, the state apparatus of repression of the national bourgeoisie erects itself as a barrier of iron and fire as soon as an organized movement of emancipation appeared in the oppressed classes.

However, in the decadent period of capitalism, we no longer find ourselves with only contradictions of interests of national bourgeoisies among themselves but, in addition, we find the constitution of imperialist blocs and the sometimes complete hegemony of imperialist countries over many smaller ones.

The constitution of the big imperialist blocs presupposes the complete subjugation of the satellite nations. The internal contradictions of the capitalist regime do not in any way give up their rights: the contradictions between the different nations composing the geographical puzzle of the world subsist and even aggravate; the constitution of the imperialist blocs only come about by super-interest, only in overbidding the contradictions by creating another one; they do not suppress the former in any way, but adjoin them in their entirety, in order to turn them into the game of their powerful interests.

Similarly, it should also be stressed here, as part of the internal contradictions of this regime:

- there is no such thing as ONE bourgeoisie whose interests are ALWAYS indissoluble;

- the interests of the bourgeoisie take second place when the danger of the revolutionary proletariat (2) is at the doorstep; but once the proletariat is defeated, the divergences of interests within the capitalist bourgeoisie class itself appear with all their acuity;

- the interests are not always contradictory;

- the characteristic of the capitalist regime is to pursue immediate interests without worrying too much about future consequences.

This is how the problems posed by the recovery of Germany in the aftermath of the other war (3) and of this one (4) become clear.

After the 1914-18 war, a social-democratic government perfectly serves the interests of the German bourgeoisie: against proletarian revolution within, for the influx of American capital and the payment of war debts. But the fatal consequence of the recovery of the German economy was to be its tendency to free itself from Anglo-American financial capitalism by shaking off its “democratic-plutocratic” yoke and to bring in fascism immediately (State capitalism in this given period).

Fascism simultaneously was the classical form of counterrevolution in some countries with advanced proletariats and of popular national revolution calling on the petty-bourgeois (bureaucrats, traders and intermediaries, small farmers) to support the large industrial capitalists and large landowners of a country to relieve themselves of the patronizing of any great imperialism. In this case, either the country is able to establish itself as a great imperialist, forming itself a separate bloc such as Hitler’s Germany, or, too weak by itself, it must turn at all costs towards an imperialist bloc and, at that moment, the game of struggles in its midst is a reflection of its inter-imperialist struggles (Spain 1936).

Capitalism, in its present period, therefore tends sporadically, and without ever succeeding perfectly, to a higher concentration and centralization on an international scale. However, since it is not a question of capitalism managing in a reasoned way in order to satisfy the interests of society as a whole, just as capitalism acts under the pressure of its immediate interests – or rather under the pressure of those of capitalist groups – in order to defend them, as within these groups themselves there are profound divergences of interests, these groups, these monopolies, these imperialist blocs, in a word this tendency towards high centralization, marks to the highest point the contradictions in which the regime is struggling, its growing instability, its attempts to survive despite everything, while the socialist revolution is objectively put on the agenda.

These block formations, this centralization, are actually created under the pressure of more violent antagonisms and they burst and dissolve as soon as these antagonisms are resolved in one way or another to be posed again on a larger scale. In a word, this apparent centralization hides an anarchy never equaled before; it marks the decadence and decomposition of the capitalist regime.

2) It would be more accurate to say: “fade away” because they persist, which increases the superiority of the revolutionary class.

3) The First World War (1914 – 1918)
4) The Second World War (1939 – 1945)
In this case, disorders – appearing to unsuspecting eyes, at the national level, in small countries or in certain colonies – are by no means revolutionary phenomena of the proletariat, even if it is physically involved, but are on the contrary struggles of inter-imperialist rivalry involving the interests of different antagonistic blocs and relying on certain social layers of these countries.

In this case, different groups are formed in the countries, within the bourgeoisie, and, according to their interests (or according to what they regard as such) are pushed towards one or another imperialist bloc. Some groups, by contrast, may think that it is necessary to be nationalist first and foremost and to prevent the intrusion of any imperialism into the country’s affairs.

In any case, mainly in the colonial countries, when a colonial bourgeoisie tends to emancipate itself from the metropolis, even through revolutionary means and even if it really believes it can achieve its autonomy, [it] can only fall back, in the present period, before the fact of the dependence of this or that imperialist block. Even if the initial objective is an emancipatory and autonomous struggle, it can in no way remain so and must fall under the control of a great imperialism.

Position on this problem for the future Revolution

On the contrary, the proletarian revolution emerges as a phenomenon tending to destroy the bourgeois state and with it the very idea of Nationalism. The proletarian revolution is, every time it occurs in history, a profound international earthquake that puts the bourgeois world in danger only to the extent that it becomes aware of its strength as an international revolutionary power; and that finds itself defeated and regressed as the state and nation, either by force or ideologically, regain control of their proletariat. Looking at the problem from this perspective, every struggle with a national character is not progressive, even and especially in a period of revolutionary upsurge.

The Communist International (CI), in considering the problem, argued that any movement with a separatist tendency would inevitably tend to weaken the metropolis and create social unrest. But this is to look at the problem from the backside, and that is what the CI did when it saw revolutions or insurrections in colonial or semi-colonial countries.

Effectively, the German revolution defeated and centrist reigning over the English and French CP’s, the proletariats of these great capitalist countries had their hands tied by opportunism; and if the revolting movements in the colonial countries had repercussions in the metropolis, this did not in any way endanger the bourgeoisie of these countries.

It is therefore in the sense that the proletariat of the most advanced countries will take their first steps in arms that they will be able to have support from the colonial exploited and from less advanced countries; but here again the nationalist peril remains intact; and it is only to the extent that the exploited of the colonial countries or vassal states will move away from this nationalism that they will be able to seriously strengthen the revolutionary movements of the most advanced countries.

The problem in the present period

In whatever way this problem is posed, it must be posed in order to apply it to a given period in function of the situation and its prospects.

For us – we have already often tried to demonstrate this in practice – the situation is one of retreat, a reactionary period and the perspective is one of imperialist war between the two blocks whose antagonisms accentuate themselves ever more gravely: the Russian block and the American block.

In this sense, the crises that have shaken Iran over Azerbaiján’s “national awakening” supported by the Russians in their press and by the “Peace” conferences and at the UN; the Kurdish “national awakening”, the “unrest” in the Arab countries, Palestine and Egypt – where it is a question of the stationing of English troops and of the prevalence of Anglo-American imperialism – also have the favor and support of Russian imperialism. In this sense too, the civil war that has reigned in China since the end of the Far East war is significant enough; Chiang Kai-shek and the nationalists would like to form Chinese National Unity for the benefit of their Anglo-American allies, while the Chinese “communists”, materially supported by the Russians, want to keep their dominance in northern China. In Korea, as well as in Germany, the national problem is under the immediate influence of the antagonisms of the two great imperialist blocks.

In Indochina, the initial result of the Vietnamese “national revolution” was to bring about a compromise between Vietnam and France because, for the time being, the Vietnamese bourgeoisie has its inter-
ests linked to those of France and it has no interest in turning to another imperialism, or because the question cannot yet be raised on the basis of geographical location or political opportunity, or simply because the Vietnamese bourgeoisie basically needs French troops to maintain order in its affairs, and because France needs the intermediary of the Vietnamese bourgeoisie to better materially and ideologically oppress the Vietnamese “people”.

The situation in India, by its topicality, attracts the most attention. The question of the Hindu constitution is not an issue today. It was in the aftermath of the 1914-18 war, after the development of the exploitation of India by English capitalism, that a “national awakening” was marked at the same time in different layers of Hindu society. But here again it is very clear today that each group has a very specific position and is in no way revolutionary or progressive.

England had previously relied, in general, on the Muslims against the Hindus, India’s rich and powerful caste. But for the English it is only a question of the “divide and conquer” policy. Today, Muslims are putting the project of forming an independent state, Pakistan, on the agenda, whose creation is very much welcomed in Moscow, the future Pakistan being very close to Russian Western Asia. This is why today, reversing their policies, the English (in this case Wavell) rely on the Hindus and other castes (the pandit Nehru, etc.) against the Muslims supported by the Russians.

Several thousand deaths in Bombay and Calcutta! General strike? Maybe! But who benefits from these troubles? Who leads them? And who pays for the broken pots?

It is a few thousand more dead that the proletariat pays in tribute to the interests of capitalism, but it is not a “step forward” towards revolution, at most a step forward towards the 3rd imperialist war. For the proletarians of these countries, in the present period, there is only one policy: not to get involved in a conflict where their immediate or remote interests are not at stake. And, on the day they will be given the strength by the contribution of a revolutionary uprising on a global scale, one policy only: the overthrow of all national barriers and all these small states.

(Remember the controversy between Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin on the national question where Rosa defends a thesis still valid today.)

‘Internationalisme’ (Gauche Communiste de France), N° 13, September 1946

Source: Le problème national et colonial http://igcl.org/internationalisme/fra/i13/i13_2.html
Translation: H.C., April 4, 2019. Final version: April 19, 2019
The CWO has continued its long-term project of translating the texts from the four issues of *the revue ‘Kommunist’ (Moscow, 1918)*, the organ of the first left fraction that emerged within the Bolshevik party since the seizure of power by the soviets in October 1917. (1)

The following table lists the recent, annotated translations, which all have been provided with an introduction by the CWO. For a complete overview of the articles published in English in the course of this project since February 2017, we refer to the ‘Russian communist left’ page on the ICT website.


1) First reference to this project by *A Free Retriever’s Digest* can be found in: *From the Bookshelf*, Vol.1#2 (Try-out, May 15, 2017). Two CWO introductions to articles from ‘Kommunist’ (1918) have been adopted in the section *Documents of the historical communist Left*: Ossinsky on State Capitalism in Russia, AFRD Vol.1#5 (October 1, 2017); · Lomov’s Economic notes and Bukharin’s book review concerning the transitional period, AFRD Vol.2#5 (October 18, 2018). See ‘Editions’ on AFRD’s web blog.
Towards a new organization of the Communist Left
The group Emancipación (Spain)

On the following pages the construction of a new organization of the communist Left is documented: the group ‘Emancipación’, who situates itself in political continuity with the communist Left in Spain, specifically with the tendency of Grandizo Munis and the Fomento Obrero Revolucionario (FOR). We briefly recapitulate the basic presentation texts from their web-sites on behalf of English readers.

They are followed up by the recent article ‘What does a communist organization do?’ which succinctly expresses the vision of the comrades on the role and function of an organization of revolutionary minorities.

This brief introduction to the nascent group concludes with two documents resulting from Emancipación’s recent conference. The first is a leaflet addressing the necessity and character of the struggle for class unity to overcome division between workers with a ‘fixed’ contract and those in precarious labor conditions: Against Precariousness (page 23). The second is an Urgent appeal to the internationalists of South America to organize for a common struggle to overcome the impact of the bourgeois left and leftism (page Error: Reference source not found).

A Free Retriever’s Digest considers these announcements and statements as a significant step towards the construction of a pole of political debate and regroupment in the Spanish speaking hemisphere, which it intends to follow critically, according to its modest means. We invite readers to conscientiously take notice of and appreciate this development.

A new stage

At the beginning of this month the nuclei of Barcelona, Bilbao, Granada, Madrid and Valladolid that during the last two years have promoted the “School of Marxism”, (1) this blog (2) and the group “Emancipation”, (3) held our first “organization conference”. Its objective has been to move on to a new stage.

Centralizing the various efforts was not in question. The whole process of developing the consciousness and capacities of the class takes the form of a centralization. In our case, it had been occurring spontaneously around “Nuevo Curso” and its editorial committee, in which we collectively discuss the topics that subsequently appear on the blog on a daily basis.

It was neither a political nor a programmatic conference. Its objective was to trace the path to realize the founding congress of a new body, different from and greater than the sum of the parts that we are now, on the programmatic bases that we share and that we have been elaborating and discussing, day by day, over the last two years. To that end we:

1. gave ourselves objectives in each of the different areas of work;
2. defined means in each area to reach them;
3. established the moment when the results would justify constituting a new organization; and finally,
4. situated our own process within the international framework.

The result has been to begin, in fact, a new stage working as a single permanent assembly and defining ourselves as members of the organization we are building: Emancipación.

‘Nuevo Curso’ / Emancipación. Declaration of March 17, 2019

Source: Una nueva etapa, https://nuevocurso.org/una-nueva-etapa/
Translation and annotations: H.C., April 8, 2019. Final version: April 19, 2019

1) Escuela de marxismo: http://marxismo.school/.
2) Nuevo Curso: https://nuevocurso.org/.
3) Emancipación: http://emancipacion.info/.
Basic principles

Capitalism
Capitalism is the first mode of production that extends to a single metabolism all over the planet. It is based on the exploitation of a working class – the proletariat – by a possessing class, the bourgeoisie. This exploitation has a collective character: it is not the “sum” of the exploitation enterprise by enterprise, sector by sector and even country by country, but it is a complex and universally extended system, which conceals in all its manifestations that capital is nothing more than unpaid work that is extracted from the whole of the workers in each production cycle.

Universal class
The proletariat is the first universal class. In the first place because, as a product of a system that already occupies the whole planet, it is universally extended and defined by the same and unique relation of exploitation: wage labor. It is this exploitation that gives it equal interests all over the world. Second, it is the universal class because, when it struggles as a class, it does not claim any particular privileges that would prepare a new form of exploitation, but it does claim universal, human, and generic needs.

Communism
This is why the class struggle of the proletariat anticipates a society, communism, in which production becomes a conscious and collective activity, not guided by capital and its logic of accumulation, but by the satisfaction of those same human needs. A society without state or scarcity, without wars or borders. The communist perspective is present in each of the expressions of struggle by the workers as a class, whether they develop or not. That is why it is the revolutionary class of the capitalist mode of production regardless of the ups and downs of its class consciousness.

Class frontiers

Internationalism
Solidarity of the world proletariat as a unity against international capitalism. Solidarity both in ideas and in acts, directed against the nation and patriotism in the first place, including the colonial countries. There can be no greater interest than that of the world proletariat, not even that of a country where revolution would have triumphed. The internationalists fight with equal fury against the two contending factions in local imperialist wars as well as in world wars, and point to the respective participants and propagandists as traffickers of human flesh. They propose and strive to organize the action of the exploited, at the front and rear, against their respective governments and military commanders. All national defense – even in its phase of resistance – conceals exploitation and oppression. The immediate enemy is, for each proletariat, in its own country; attacking it to the fullest is a condition for unleashing the struggle of the proletariat in other countries and undertaking, united, the destruction of capitalism throughout the world.

Centralism
Centralism is the organizational expression of the idea of unity of the proletarian class as a universal political subject. In the working class, “centralism” does not mean adherence to a formal principle, the defense of a certain typology of command structures. And of course, it does not mean concentrating power in a single person or group but, on the contrary, means extending the scope of any class struggle organization to all its members, reflecting the universal character whose heart beats under each class expression, and putting this before any particularism, any sentiment or prejudice, imaginary privilege or real oppression. In other words: when it comes to formulate demands, to organize and engage in a combat, we do not accept divisions by nationality, sex, age, type of contract or anything else. Any convocation, assembly or militancy limited to one sex, to one nationality, to one type of contract, to the workers of a single mother tongue or any other division reneges on the fact of doing so, of their class character.
Communist tactics today

All factions of the bourgeoisie, big or small, oppressed or oppressing, in the market or the state, today are reactionary. We cannot engage in a common front with any of them.

State property is not socialism. Stalinist Russia, Maoist China, Castroist Cuba or Chávist Venezuela were never socialist, but state capitalisms.

All nationalisms are reactionary. Since a century no progressive national liberation has been possible. To place ourselves under a national flag is to line up for the slaughterhouse.

The trade unions are an integral part of the state. The only way to carry out the struggles is self-organization, the extension of strikes and the formation of committees to coordinate them among themselves.

Our Tendency

... founded the Spanish Communist Party in 1920 and created the Spanish group of the Left Opposition to Stalinism in 1930, then the Spanish Communist Left, participating in the foundation of the International Opposition and also serving as a seed and reference to the communist lefts in Argentina (1933-43) and Uruguay (1937-43).

... takes the revolutionary position in the workers’ insurrection of July 19, 1936 and is the only Marxist tendency to take part in the revolutionary insurrection of 1937 in Barcelona.

... became the Spanish section of the Fourth International in 1938 and, since 1943, struggled against centrist in its midst; it denounced the latter’s betrayal of internationalism and its consequent departure from the class terrain at its second congress (1948), leading to the rupture of the last internationalist elements and the formation of the “International Workers’ Union” with the splinters. Its bases recognized Stalinist Russia and its satellites as state capitalisms and reject the Stalinist “defense of the USSR”, the possibility of progressive national liberation and the united fronts with tendencies such as social democracy or Stalinism, which have crossed class frontiers. It took up the critique of the trade union as a structure integrated in state capitalism.

... is implanted since 1952 in the peninsula, being the only internationalist tendency in the clandestinity in Franco’s Spain. After suffering an important fall at the hands of repression, it was reorganized internationally from 1958 to 1993 under the acronym FOR (“Fomento Obrero Revolucionario”).

Source: ‘Nuevo Curso’, Journal of Emancipación

What does a communist organization do?

What makes a political organization valid for the class struggle?

That the function of communists in the class struggle is to serve as a ferment to the development of consciousness is hardly denied by anyone. Class consciousness develops in two dimensions: on the one hand, on the basis of the accentuations that take place in the political groups who express the movement in general, it tends to become deeper, to better understand the historical moment, to outline the possible limits of tactics, and so on. In short: consciousness develops as a program. But the communist program is a guide to action, not the program of a spectacle that is viewed from the gallery. The program is an instrument for the second dimension of class consciousness: its extension, its integration into the practice of the class struggles.

In one sense or another, consciousness lags behind the practice of the class itself. The program advances from the [maturación] (1) that follows every revolutionary expression of the class, sharpening after every defeat since 1847. And in the class as a

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1) In the source: “accendramiento”. According to ‘Nuevo Curso’s ‘Marxist dictionary’ this means “defining oneself in the critique of class historical experience until one gains the necessary clarity to adopt net political positions and defend them without half-meaning languages.” It is here translated in the sense of “maturation”. (Editor’s note)
whole, in its concrete struggles, consciousness becomes all the deeper as it becomes necessary to understand the path that concrete strikes and mobilizations themselves trace in order not to be defeated and to take a new step forward.

Therefore, if the political organization is not useful to the concrete development of the struggles, it can hardly be useful to the conscience. If, when we go on strike with our comrades or when in our neighborhood or city the workers mobilize against the deterioration of living and working conditions, we only bring forward the communist perspective, the abolition of wage labor, we will be a moralizing organization at best, dedicated to promoting communist morality. It does no harm, in fact it is an important and necessary contribution, but it has a trap: if we internalize that our function is to promote the diffusion of the communist objective without participating in the development of the means and measures necessary to achieve it, we will end up concluding that the abolition of salaried work could be done “one by one”... but the conditions will never have been met. We will have become “Utopians”. (2) And the conditions that make possible the abolition of capitalism are all those measures that the struggles must take to be able to develop, all those demands whose realization the workers are taking into their own hands. What is even worse, once the link between the concrete struggle and its objective has been lost, we will end up without distinguishing the class expression from its state encapsulation. Our center will no longer be in the struggles, but in any place where the workers group or are grouped, not to carry out actions – a program – that transforms and negates their situation, but at best to represent them, as an inoperative “workers identity”: from a union processión to a feminist demonstration or a nationalist “fake strike”.

The content determines the forms. From the clear idea that “to intervene in the class” is not simply to spread communist morality, it follows that the ideal of intervention is not to stand at the door of every striking factory or enterprise either. There may be no other remedy at certain times, but that “outside intervention” is the image of weakness itself, not to say of despair. This was the result and the stamp that left us the fragility and weakening of the struggles of the late 1970s and 1980s. This weakness became that of a few meager political organizations, incapable of nourishing themselves with the vanguard that, in the enterprises and the neighborhoods, promoted the advance of the struggles. What class political organization is all about, is grouping and [nurturing] those vanguards that appear in every workplace and in every space in which the class tries to respond to the permanent aggression of capitalism. That’s why the first objective of any class political organization is to organize itself in the places where the struggles are going to appear: the workplaces and the neighborhoods. How else will it become the most conscious part of the movement itself? How else can we contribute to the assemblies that organize every discussion and concrete struggle? The objective of the organization is not to “go to the factory gate”, to intervene “from the outside”, but to “already be inside”, to express organizationally and contribute to the maturation of the vanguard that pushes the struggles in each enterprise and neighborhood.

‘Nuevo Curso’, April 2, 2019

Source: ¿Qué hace una organización comunista? https://nuevocurso.org/que-hace-una-organizacion-comunista/
Translation and annotations: H.C., April 8, 2019. Final version: April 19, 2019

A quotation from “Acendremos Camaradas” (Munis, 1975)

“To postulate the communist revolution, even flanked by the abolition of salaried labor, is no more than a blurred notion, even supposing it – a vain hope in the present world – shared by the majority. Because the elimination of salaried labor as a direct objective, once power has been wrested from capital, is far from being a single act, like the abolition of its laws or the dismantling of its state obstacle. This is broken down or subdivided into a series of measures, the immediate and mediate effects of which will result in such elimination, the basic social structure of communist society. The principal measures, the most transcendent ones, are derived from the current situation of the class, from its maximum possibilities in contrast to a crushing and decadent capitalism that is no longer entitled to exist. Where, if not in their formulation and defense near the proletariat, can the consciousness of a revolutionary organization appear? The tendencies that avoid doing so, whatever their numerical size, are condemned to harmless rows, if not to charlatanism.”
Two statements by ‘Emancipación’

Against Precariousness (Leaflet)

There is no better capitalism
The logic of capital is easy to understand: a capital that does not reproduce, one that does not make profits, dies. And if it gives profits, these become capital and have to be amortized in the next cycle as well. A capital augmented with each profit cycle needs to produce new profits, and in the absence of new markets – real or fictitious, that is: created on the basis of credit – this can only be achieved by increasing exploitation. There are two ways of doing this.

1. The “ideal” according to the bourgeoisie itself is to incorporate technologies that make it possible to produce more within fewer hours of work, that is: to increase relative exploitation. In theory this would allow wages and profits to be increased at the same time, but only on condition that the market increases as well. This was the engine of the expansion of capitalism throughout the world during the 19th century. But for a century there have been no “virgin” markets. In fact, Spanish capital has access to fewer and fewer markets. The inevitable consequence is that technological improvement does not produce increases in the total wage bill, but rather unemployment.

2. The other way is simply to pay less per hour worked, lowering wages, signing contracts for 4 hours which are then full time, doing unpaid overtime, etc.

The first path is that of robotization, digitization, etc. The second is that of precariousness. For decades, the work organization has been reorganized and restructured on all sides, disassociating the worker from work places and teams, basic services, contract expectations and stable incomes. They break and atomize us so that, in the end, they exploit us more.

Precariousness is not a policy but a necessity of capital. Their laws will not defend us.

In Spain today, one out of every two euros of growth is remunerating capital. This is how capital has come out of the crisis... by impoverishing us and making us precarious.

That is why its legislation is not going to protect us. They would not raise the minimum wage if at the same time they did not lower the wages for skilled jobs. They pay us a little more than the minimum but they equalize us all downward so that overall capital pays less. With the crisis 30 billion in wages have been lost but profits have increased by 14 billion.

Workers have neither country... nor sector
All over the world we are called upon to close ranks with the needs of this or that faction of capital: to save national industry, to support small commerce, to discover supposed common interests with Catalan, Andalusian or Venezuelan capital. But the truth is that the less a sector, a country or a region is capitalized, the more urgent is the need for capital to increase exploitation in absolute terms.

That is why the whip for the working youth, from Berlin to Buenos Aires, passing through the door of our own house, is the service sector, the least capitalized of the large sectors. That is why countries and regions with weaker national capitals are becoming precarious ever faster. To wrap ourselves in the regional flag or to defend the sector would come down to putting the rope around our necks [by ourselves].

The Trade Unions organize precariousness
That is why trade unions have been and are the first agents of precariousness. In Navantia (shipyards) they tell us that without contracts, without sales, it makes no sense to struggle, that we have to subordinate our needs to the existence of benefits and accept to work – and receive pay – only when the company has orders. In the car industry (Opel, Seat, PSA, Ford) they organize the auction of the working conditions of the plants. They sell us that only if we accept insane shifts, lower salaries and contracts without protection, we will be able to be competitive with other plants in other countries... where the unions tell them exactly the same thing.

What to do
One of the advantages of precariousness for capital is that it atomizes us and hinders collective struggle. Today we are hired as cleaners for a week, within a month we do a loading shift at an oil mill, for a weekend we serve at weddings and if lucky, we are hired for a campaign of teleoperators for three months. We are interchangeable, flexible... and if it were up to
them, we would be completely isolated, hoping without seeing anyone who deigns to exploit us.

That is why the first thing we have to do everywhere, is to break the dividing line between fixed and temporary work, between hired by the company and subcontracted, between one sector and another, between one company and another. We are all workers, we are all more or less precarious and if we start looking for who is worse off, we will all end up below the biological minimum for the greater glory of national capital and its competitiveness. We must all mobilize together, as a class, and collectively control every conquest we make.

- For a mobilization of all workers together against precariousness and unemployment;

- Assemblies without divisions by contract or employer in companies of a certain size, neighborhood assemblies of workers in the hotel and small trade sectors;

- End of piecework, of work without a contract and overtime;

- Reduction of the maximum working day to 30 hours per week with the same monthly net amount.

_Emancipación_. Leaflet of March 16, 2019

Source: _Contra la precarización_, http://emancipacion.info/contra-la-precarizacion/

Translation and annotations: H.C., April 8, 2019.

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Urgent appeal to the internationalists of South America

Today, in Santiago de Chile, all the bourgeoisies of South America but for those of Uruguay, Bolivia and Venezuela will constitute ProSur. This new institutional framework represents the subordination of the strategy of the South American national capitals to that of Brazil, economically and militarily stronger and presently blessed as a regional partner and guardian of a major imperialism: that of the United States of America.

The appearances of a bloc, however, do not deceive about the violently contradictory nature of the new alliance. Its first victims will be counted among those who today figure as its founders. Dragged into an ignominious arms race, drowned in their imperialist
needs – to export, to reach agreements with other imperialist gangs like China or the European Union – the South American bourgeoisies are impelled to align themselves or perish. On the horizon appears again the, almost forgotten, specter of the continental war.

A new era is beginning on the continent, in which only an internationalist response from the workers, a response that recognizes all bourgeoisies – continental and extra-continental – as a single enemy, will be able to confront the otherwise unstoppable militarist and warmongering tendencies that inevitably develop in parallel with the increasingly direct attack on our wages and living conditions.

The responsibility of the veritable internationalists is immense. After a century of bombardment and praise of national liberation, after decades of selling us totalitarian state capitalism as socialism, the political expression of the interests and possibilities of the workers is practically unknown. The individuals and groups that irremediably emerge in search of class positions, mostly die drowned in nationalist leftism and left nationalism, both expressions of classes for which the abolition of wage labor and merchandise is as inconceivable as not taking sides in an inter-bourgeois dispute, either between states – that is, between national bourgeoisies – or within them.

Therefore, we urgently call upon all internationalists in South America, whether formally organized or not, to build together with us an international coordination under the principle that every faction of the bourgeoisie is today reactionary and that therefore, in any war to come, the first real enemy will always be the capital of one’s own country.

Emancipación. Communiqué of March 22, 2019

Source: Llamado urgente a los internacionalistas de América del Sur, http://emancipacion.info/llamado-urgente-a-los-internacionalistas-de-america-del-sur/

Translation: H.C., April 8, 2019. Final version: April 19, 2019
Discussion on the popular revolt in France
The ‘Yellow Vests’ movement: Possibility or Plague? (II)

In the previous issue of A Free Retriever’s Digest we presented a review of the heterogeneous analyses and positions advanced in the political milieu of the communist Lefts with regards the ‘yellow vests’ movement. In addition, we were able to document the start of a discussion between Nuevo Curso and the IGCL on the significance and perspectives of this popular revolt.

In this issue we continue with the following contributions:

1. In Robin Goodfellow in the Land of the ‘Yellow Vests’, the Pantopolis blog criticizes this group’s historic framework of reference, that of an “unfinished bourgeois revolution”, dear to the Bordigist current, and its consequences;

2. In Bourgeois in Yellow Vests our review continues with a critique of the tendency, shown by divers expressions of the left communist milieu, to make concessions to bourgeois “grass roots” democratism, and even populism, which puts them near to the pitfalls of the bourgeois ultra-left;

3. Finally, Hotheads in the Lion’s Skin attempts to situate one of the most ‘radical’ appearances among the ‘yellow vests’, which explicitly assimilates an ‘insurrectionist’ attitude with a proletarian outlook, and appears to be teaming up with strange bedfellows.

Contributions in this Issue:

* Robin Goodfellow in the Land of the ‘Yellow Vests’
  A critique by the Pantopolis blog (March 15, 2019) (page 27)

* Bourgeois in Yellow Vests
  A review of positions within the left communist milieu (2) (page 30)

* Revolutionaries or Asses in the Lion’s Skin?
  A comment on Nosotros Proletarios’ insurrectionism (page 33)

Readers are invited to send appreciations of the presented texts, the questions treated and/or own contributions on the subject per e-mail. Correspondence may be eligible for publication, providing the authors’ consent.

Interesting reading,

The editor.
The author’s introduction: We are happy to [refer to] the latest text from the group Robin Goodfellow (RGF). (1) Coming from the Bordigist camp, it has striven to always be in tune with the class struggle, despite the desperately academic tone of its publications. This text shows a positive spirit of openness towards the movement of the ‘yellow vests’, in which proletarians predominate. Contrary to some sects falsely laying claim to left-wing communism, Robin Goodfellow did not spit on the movement, quite the contrary. These sects did, by the way, not manifest an “aristocracy” of revolutionary “purists”, but rather the ubuesque (2) holy fear of micro-bureaucrats, ready to hide under their beds at the first signs of serious confrontation with the “forces of order”, shamefully describing the healthy reaction of the yellow vests to the terrible force of the capitalist state (3) as “useless violence.”


2) “Ubuesque” = worthy of the grotesque character created by Alfred Jarry, “père Ubu”, in the play “Ubu Roi” (1896). See: Ubu the King in Wikipedia.

3) This specifically applies to demonstrators defending themselves against police attacks during the demonstrations on December 1st, 2018. According to the author, acts of pillage and destruction like the burning of cars and the looting of shops constitute excesses that may well have been organized by the state. This question is however not a subject of the present article. (Editor’s note)

The text of Robin Goodfellow is very precise on the classes, or rather the heterogeneous layers that have intervened in the movement of the ‘yellow vests’. It deserves to be welcomed for demonstrating that, in the ‘yellow vests’ movement, the proletariat is very much present (workers, employees), even as a vast majority.

Nevertheless, it sins by its plebeian perspective, by its references to the immortal Jacobin revolution (for RGF we are in Ventôse 227...). Let us recall that the Bordigist International Communist Party (Le Prolétaire), formerly used to praise the uncultivated actions of the plebeian masses of the third world to the skies. (1) Goodfellow’s text also praises Lenin’s positions on the emancipation of “peoples” deprived of a national framework. The bourgeoise revolution would still be on the agenda everywhere!

The real question has already been posed by Gorter in 1920, in his Open Letter to comrade Lenin: (5) the proletariat is tragically alone, divided, scattered, having lost its class compass, without a communist perspective, in the impossibility of imagining that internationally it is the TRUE BEARER of a REAL social emancipation of the entire population of the globe.

Today, the proletarians in yellow vests make no reference whatsoever to the proletarian revolutions of a century ago, a period in which the prospect of the annihilation of the capitalist system was clearly posed. The 1791 tricolor flag, the Jacobin guillotine, the PEOPLE and the NATION of the bourgeois revolution are, for the moment, their only references. Forty years of over-simplified history curricula in schools (where one no longer speaks about workers revolutions, Russia, Germany, Hungary, etc., except under the heading “totalitarianism”) and a total control of the capitalist state over the media also explain the sidereal void of any radical political thinking among the ‘yellow vests’.

What about the petty bourgeoisie whose ideology triumphs in this movement? Some petty bourgeois strata are proletarianized (auto-entrepreneurs, part-time work, job “Uberization”, perpetual intermittent unemployment). The ends of the month are painfully difficult for the majority, but it is not yet a situation of the type of 1923 in Germany.

Many of these layers benefit from the system (executives and others living in the interstices of capitalism), which has become completely PARASITICAL; a system based on the production and sale of socially useless goods. The other petty bourgeois lay-

4) It suffices to refer to the the ICP’s press in the 1970s for its persistent allusion to plebeian movements, specifically in the ‘Third World’.

5) Gorter, 1920:
   https://www.marxists.org/archive/gorter/1920/open-letter.htm
ers are slowly proletarianized, but do not realize that for a moment they become part of those without financial reserves. Individualized for decades as "consumers", they deny themselves as producers. They draw on their memories of republican mythology (the Bastille, the taking of the Tuileries, the sans-culottes) to adorn themselves with the clothes OF THE PEOPLE IN REVOLT, that of Victor Hugo’s LES MISERABLES, those who only receive the crumbs of the system. Like the sans-culottes of republican mythology, they focus all their hatred on the royal person. They turn the arrogant bourgeois parvenu Macron into an almighty king, whom it would simply be a matter of deposing oneself in order to found a “participatory republic”, fairer by less taxes (this was the eternal claim of the popular masses under the monarchy: less taxes). They do not yet see that all politicians, from Le Pen to Mélenchon, are only defending a capitalist system with a different verbiage.

These layers still believe that “democracy” (the ‘Referendum on Citizens’ Initiative’, or RIC) can be relied on in the framework of a bourgeois mechanism where all the dice are loaded in advance. Hence this oscillation of these “insurgent” layers, throwing themselves into more symbolic than real acts of “violence” (destruction of ATMs, the hunt for BMWs, etc.), only to fall back into the bipolar phase of apathy, an apathy that is gaining ever more ground.

Without perspectives given by a proletariat that is RECONSTITUING itself as a CLASS, the movement can only move resolutely towards the void, while the bourgeoisie is already seasoned and prepared for more serious confrontations with the proletariat. The use of sub-lethal weapons against the ‘yellow vests’ shows what the proletarians can expect when, united by coherent slogans and resolute action against capital, they will set themselves in motion. There will be torrents of blood from the bourgeoisie public will drink from – as it is said in the Marseillaise – in the streets and in the furrows of the fields of the “French homeland”.

It is strange, to say the least, (but not surprising in the context of a mythical plebeian revolution) that Robin Goodfellow calls for a deepening of “democracy” and outlines a few slogans that could have been drawn from Trotsky’s Transitional Program (6):

- “the demand for the repeal of laws that limit freedom of expression and obstruct freedom of demonstration”;
- “the abolition of all indirect taxes; proportional income tax”;
- “the removal of inheritance beyond a certain threshold.”

And for good measure, Robin Goodfellow has sprinkled his sauce with claims taken from Engels and William Morris, even from bourgeois planning (impossible in the chaotic and disorderly reign of Merchandise), pompously called “territorial planning”:

- “Reconciliation of the city and the countryside; harmonization of the population on the territory; abolition of large cities, etc.”

Last but not least, one remains dissatisfied with the final slogan launched by Robin Goodfellow, that of “REAL DEMOCRACY”, worthy of the old Stalinist electoral platforms. As for proletarian democracy, the only “democracy” that is an alternative to bourgeois democracy, it is never mentioned: speaking about it clearly would lead to a resolute criticism of the Leninist conceptions that are the negation of this proletarian democracy.

Robin Goodfellow in fact actually calls for the constitution of a TRUE bourgeois democracy, with TRUE communist parliamentarians, TRUE class unions, as in the good old days. For Robin Goodfellow, the return to outdated forms of class struggle is the “deepening of democracy”.

However, we are no longer in 1905, as RGF imagines, but in 2019 when it is very well a question of DESTROYING FROM TOP TO BOTTOM a system, capitalism, and not of making it “acceptable” to the plebeian masses (“deepening”, implying “developing” in the reformist sense).

As for Robin Goodfellow’s “program”, it remains on standby, “in transition”, as it used to be called. It takes up the old slogans from the Comintern era: “conquest of political power, proletarian government, revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat”. Does this mean that the proletariat will come to power through the miracle of the holy UNITED FRONT between “class parties” and “red” unions? (which Goodfellow particularly likes in Brazil). And if there is “dictatorship of the proletariat”, does that mean that there will be only one

6) L.D. Trotsky, 1928:
https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/ip
(class) party in power and all the others in prison? With the “red terror” as the icing on the cake?

Not for a moment it comes to the mind of these brilliant ramblers of Marxology that the proletarians could organize themselves tomorrow into councils (organizations gathering the working class as a class [for itself]). Believing that they have an answer to everything, they drown the fish in a pile of footnotes, real lianas that suffocate their text itself. Do they seriously believe that they will form the class party, with the aim of establishing the dictatorship of this party, without the armed proletarians, organized in councils, having the slightest say? What is the real subject of tomorrow’s proletarian world revolution? Is it the COMPACT AND POWERFUL CLASS PARTY (i.e. the Bordigist Party)? Or the class of proletarians whose parties are only the most determined PARTS?

Reading the text of Robin Goodfellow, one will notice that there is no mention of any real attempts by proletarians to set up autonomous bodies (assemblies of Commercy, Saint-Nazaire), even if this attempt is marred by populist wording (“by the people, for the people, with the people...”). Even if embryonic, these attempts must be taken seriously. They should have challenged Robin Goodfellow to underline that the process of developing class consciousness is a long and contradictory process, with advances and retreats, before the embryos of political organizations of the proletariat emerge.

Robin Goodfellow seems to believe that the REAL PARTY will come out all armed with the INVARIANT PROGRAM of 1848, embodied FORMALLY today by a few brilliant solitary individuals or sects from the “Bordigist” or other milieu? What does RGF, very mysteriously and with a learned air, calls the “communist movement”? One is left to guess whether this communist movement includes the whole political space from Gilles Dauvé (the initiator of the journal ‘Mouvement Communiste’ in 1972) to the current Trotskyist camp...

Instead of reciting the mantras of the CLASS PARTY, it is first necessary to insert oneself into all the class movements, which Robin Goodfellow seems to do. But that is not enough. We must constantly insist on the need for general class organizations, combat organizations, in order to be able to REALLY put an end to the destructive and bloody reign of capital.

It makes no longer sense to endlessly ramble on the “deepening” of democracy, as it is about working for the destruction of bourgeois democracy and all its parliamentary deceptions, in order to put an end to its robbery by organized capitalist bands of the wealth created by the proletarian class.


Source: R.G. au pays des Gilets jaunes
Translation and annotations: H.C., March 31, 2019

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With Special Attention: Bourgeois in Yellow Vests

A review of positions within the left and council communist milieus (2)

For months now, the ‘yellow vests’ movement in France has not shown any of the dynamics of a proletarian mass struggle. As the International Group of the Communist Left (IGCL) rightly pointed out in its second communiqué, (1) it was the minimum wage demands that could have triggered the mobilization of working and non-working workers. These demands have now disappeared under an avalanche of demands for ‘democracy’ and of talk about “from the people, by the people and for the people.” What remains are in fact political minorities, most of whom are trying to develop right and/or left populist bourgeois perspectives. Some of the groups and individuals who base their positions more or less on the communist left, try to bring forward in this environment, in which the class enemy dominates, proletarian perspectives that go beyond the ‘yellow vests’.

It is not easy for left communists to be active in what has manifested itself from the start as a movement for the people and democracy. In that situation it is easier to put forward democratic illusions. This is reflected in early positions, from a part of the revolutionary milieu that – rightly or wrongly, I will come back to this later – is called ‘councilist’.

On December 10, Raoul Victor sees ‘The Movement of the Yellow Vests’ (?) in the continuity of “Nuit Debout (some speak of the current movement as a ‘proletarian Nuits Debout’) and of the movements of occupying public spaces (Occupy in the USA, Indignados in Spain, etc ...)” For the sake of convenience, he passes over the fact that the ‘yellow vests’ overflow with disgusting talk about ‘the people’, where this was virtually absent with Nuit Debout and in the occupations of squares. He concentrates on “talk about ‘direct democracy’, ‘elected and revocable delegates’, the need to reorganize everything, to change the system. See for example the Call of the Yellow Vests of the city of Commercy to popular assemblies everywhere! or the experiences of ‘The House of the People’ in Saint Nazaire.” But where is the proletarian character of the ‘yellow vests’? In his first paragraph Victor still mentions “the policy which uses unemployment and the threat of unemployment to impose social submission,” but the increasing number of unemployed and non-working proletarians is beyond his scope. He does not recognize them as part of the working class, but seems to place them with the non-exploiting strata of the population to whom he attributes a revolutionary character: “if one day a general uprising (of the 99% of which Occupy was talking) would come about, it will not only result from the struggle of ‘proletarians’, those who are directly exploited by capital, but also of a whole set of non-exploiting layers.”

What kind of ‘analysis’ is this? What is the view that the people, excluding the ‘exploiters’ – especially the “Rothschilds” – and the “political elite”, are considered ‘revolutionary’? Isn’t that populism? Of course Victor does not consider himself a populist. The underlying problem is that large parts of the current proletariat who are outside the labor process, or who participate in it as ‘self-employed without personnel’ do not recognize themselves as wage workers. Raoul Victor “solves” this problem by “explaining” them in uncomfortable “meetings and in joint decision-making” NOT what they are ‘an Sich’ (objectively): PROLETARIANS, but that they belong to the non-exploiting strata, that is, by dissolving them in the “people”, just as the dominant tendency in the ‘yellow vests’ movement does. The bitter truth is that “direct democracy” has no meaning for the working class when it is not supported by demands and slogans that express its independence as a revolutionary and exploited class against all other classes. Only on the basis of independence as a class, the revolutionary proletariat can unite parts of non-exploiting classes (such as some of the peasants) behind its project for a world without capital, without oppression, and without war.

1) See: A Balance Sheet of the ‘Yellow Vests’ Movement in France: 2nd Communiqué by the IGCL (January 27, 2019). For a first discussion see as well: “The popular Revolt in France. Possibility or Plague?”, A Free retriever’s Digest Vol.3 #1 (February – March 2019), page 26 ff.

2) R. Victor, December 10, 2018, “The Movement of the Yellow Vests”, published by Internationalist Perspective as a text by the Paris discussion circle, of which, however, nothing has been heard of for a long time.
Whereas Victor does not recognize the new, populist element in the ‘yellow vests’, in a related publication, Grand Large, we see the attempt to substantiate populism with the praxis theory of Lukács. In ‘Gilets Jaunes’, et après? 1) Lejardinier rightly emphasizes the difference with the Arab Spring: in France the illusions in bourgeois democracy are much weaker than in Arab countries. At first sight, this seems to be the position of the German and Dutch Communist Left. At the same time, however, this Left underlined that democracy, in what was then called “the highly developed capitalist countries”, is much more deeply rooted in thought and that the democratic ideology can only be overcome in the course of a long struggle. According to Lejardinier, the demand for grass-roots democracy is “not simply a demand for ‘more democracy’ as we have seen in the movements of the ‘Arab springs’, but a desire to free oneself from the system of representation, to no longer abandon one’s power of speech and decision to others. It is therefore a movement of resuscitation, in opposition to reification: to become a subject again where capitalism turns proletarians into objects.” These ‘dialectical’ leaps of thought led Lejardinier to the following conclusion: “As previously mentioned, this claim can only set the door to recuperation by the ruling class wide open. Nevertheless, for those who have experienced it, the will to oppose the State, to make their voices heard, to refuse their precarious living conditions and to want to decide their fate without entrusting it to others, will leave deep political traces. Indeed here lies the power of praxis: when thought becomes action, it is lived in the flesh of those who set out on their journey.”

Like with Raoul Victor, the grass-root democracy idea is seen separately from the struggle. Lejardinier refers to precarious living conditions, but does not see that the proletarian slogans and demands in this field of struggle have now been buried under populist rubbish, leaving fine principles about elections and re-elections as empty shells. How is this possible? The cause probably lies in the recourse to Blum theses 2) Lejardinier, December 27, 2018, “Gilets Jaunes’, et après?”, probably written on a personal title, published at Grand Large, a split-off of Internationalist Perspective, the latter complaining that they do not understand the reason for the split. Contrary to his ‘left-wing’ image with certain academics, Lukács was not part of the Communist Left, but of the Stalinized Communist Party, in which he repeatedly played a questionable role. 3)

The ideological deceptions of ‘the people’ and ‘democracy’ do not only date from Stalin’s victory of ‘socialism in one country’, they go back to the politics of the Communist International, dominated by the Russian CP. The Bolshevik analysis of the end of the 2nd International concentrates on ‘treason’ by its leaders, and focuses on a change of leadership, while maintaining the Social-democratic tactics from the period of reforms. Specially the German and Dutch Communist Left opposed this by proposing new tactics, adapted to the change of period, into one of inter-imperialist war, decadence of capitalism and proletarian world revolution. 4) The drift towards the bourgeois positions of ‘the people’ and ‘democracy’ is currently supported ideologically from several sides by relying on Bolshevik positions imposed on the communist parties via the Third International. These ‘tactics’ of front building with (parts of) the bourgeoisie, of ‘revolutionary’ parliamentarianism, of ‘re-conquering’ the unions or the establishment of ‘revolutionary’ unions, of the ‘right of nations to self-determination’ in fact made the communist movement an instrument of Russia’s foreign policy.

The Bolsheviks had come to lead what they called a “workers’ state”, despite the fact that it oppressed and exploited wage laborers in circumstances that put Tsarism in the shadow. Eventually, these ‘tactics’ changed the communist parties, born from the workers’ resistance against the First World War, into enthusiastic participants in the Second World War, in defense of the “Soviet” Union, first on the side of national “socialism” later on that of “democracy”.

As usual, it’s the Trotskyists who are the champions of bourgeois deceptions they present as clever tricks of their ‘transition program’. This is how the IGCL reports: “the comrades (sic, F.C.) of the group Matière et Révolution (France) referred us to Lenin’s text on the 1916 debate on the right of nations to self-determina-

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2) Wikipedia, “Georg Lukács”.
vince ‘invariant’ or ‘orthodox Marxists’ that take every word from [its] holy scriptures for real. Lenin’s feeling for the evolution of the working class struggle prevented him from falling into certain traps in Bolshevik theory – traps like “the right to self-determination of the peoples” – that have only been fully realized in the interior and exterior policy of the Russian state once the Bolsheviks were “in power”, in reality when they were guided by the ‘trust-state’ that they mistakenly considered as an instrument of proletarian dictatorship.

Even when in 1916 Lenin considered 1905 in Russia as a ‘bourgeois-democratic revolution’ he insisted “the class-conscious workers led it.” And on “the socialist revolution in Europe”, Lenin was very clear that “sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it (...) and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses [and] errors. But objectively they will attack capital, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it.” (7) Nowadays ‘the people’ and ‘democracy’ are exactly these prejudices, these reactionary fantasies, these weaknesses and errors, on which Lenin insisted to wage a vigorous combat.

It has been up to a super-Trotskyist and self-proclaimed modern Jacobin to build a ‘theory’ of ‘the people’ and ‘democracy’ that gives the verbiage of ‘sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers’ a semblance of revolution: ‘Robin Goodfellow’ in “La lutte des classes en France – 2018-2019 – Le mouvement des ‘Gilets jaunes’.” I will not even try to summarize this 21 pages ‘masterpiece’ that glorifies the bourgeois revolution, which has remained unfinished and has yet to be completed by the Proletarian Party... in France. Its conclusion will be just enough to demonstrate its method:

“(...) the strategy of permanent revolution does not only concern the anti-feudal bourgeois revolution but the democratic republic as well. It is always a question of pushing democracy to the limit, to ensure that the obstacles to the confrontation between the proletariat and capital are as leveled as possible, so as to bring out the relationship of exploitation, the relationship between capital party to have the tour, the other parties have to have exhausted themselves in power, or to have discredited themselves as incapable of dealing with the questions raised by the revolutionary process”. (9)

Goodfellow has been severely criticized by ‘Pantopolis’ for his Bordigism and his apology of the bourgeois revolution in an interesting article “R.G. au pays des Gilets jaunes”, (10) only after honoring him for “a positive spirit of openness towards the movement of the ‘yellow vests’, in which proletarians predominate (...) [The text] deserves to be welcomed for demonstrating that, in the ‘yellow vests’ movement, the proletariat is very much present (workers, employees), even as a vast majority.” This is really too much honor – the passage left out here shows that Pantopolis probably appreciated Goodfellow’s attack on the ICC-sect – because the class character of a movement is not determined by its social composition, even if the proletariat ‘an Sich’ is in majority, nor by its forms of organization in themselves, but by its political contents and their tendencies.

In this sense the ‘yellow vests’ movement has arisen as and has remained an inter-class movement in which the petty-bourgeois ideologies of ‘the people’ and ‘democracy’ were dominant. By the vast participation of workers outside of the production process, the slogans and demands on minimum wage started to crystallize a movement of the proletariat that threatened to surpass this inter-class movement. The fear of the bourgeois for what has remained just a tendency, a possibility, was the only reason for Macron to engage in a temporal retreat of his attacks.

Whereas the contributions of Goodfellow and Pantopolis are worthwhile reading, one should wonder what the most class conscious and combative proletarians ‘in yellow vests’ will learn from them. In fact the struggle for a proletarian perspective is fought in the remainders of the movement, in the ‘empty shells’ as I have called them. Revolutionary minorities should not be indifferent towards these elements but should try to discuss with them – in the ‘empty shells’ – on the basis of a clear opposition toward the popular, national and democratic bourgeois ideologies, be they in their right-wing

7) IGCL: “Lenin and... the Yellow Vests in France?”.  
10) Pantopolis, R.G. au pays des Gilets jaunes. [Ref. To English translation in AFRD]
form or in that of a left Jacobinism, Trotskyism or Bordigism.

We have seen that these ideologies are not only part of ‘councilism’ but that they are propagated as well – even with more “theoretical” vigor - by councilism’s counterparts stemming from Bolshevism: Trotskyism and Bordigism. Specially the Trotskyists of _Matière et Révolution_ have a strong presence and concentrate now on driving the remainders of the ‘yellow vests’ back into unionism. Traditionally some elements of the Communist Left and the Bordigist group _Le Prolétaire_ mingle in the same milieu, that sometimes succeeds in making them act in bourgeois direction. In the most recent text by _Le Prolétaire_ (1) it is worth noting how they stick to the illusions of ‘class unionism’ in their formulations (“break with the defeatist methods and orientations of political and trade union collaborationism”). Forgetting the growing number of workers outside production: students, unemployed, the sick and disabled, retired workers, they concentrate on the working parts of the class and their means of struggle, the strike. No reference is made to action committees open to all categories of the proletariat, no words are wasted on the dangers of ‘popular struggle’ and inter-class movements. Hanging at the tail of Trotskyism, _Le Prolétaire_ is falling back on the Bordigist illusion of a ‘combative’ syndicalism.


Proofreading: H.C., April 3, 2019
Final version: April 19, 2019

**Revolutionaries or Asses in the Lion’s Skin?**

A comment on _Nosotros Proletarios_’ insurrectionism

*A Free Retriever’s Digest*’s attention has been drawn to a leaflet, dated April 22, by ‘_nosotros proletarios_’ (“we proletarians”), agitating with regards to the ‘yellow vests’ movement in France in view of upcoming May 1 manifestations, notably at Paris. (1)

It contains an appeal to “yellow vests (or not)” and “black blocs (or not)” for “a 1st of May of combat – direct anti-capitalist action”, to which they stipulate their “need to develop our perspectives, our ruptures and radicality towards this world, to break the coherence of the cops and gendarmes who suppress us, to search for the masters who govern us (...) in their unasailable fortresses, to set fire to their palaces and castles, to knock down the citadels of profit, to pillage their banks, to block the whole economy, to dissolve their rate of surplus value and - at the same occasion - our exploitation, to organize the veritable strike of our class: the general insurrectionist strike, etc.”

‘Nosotros proletarios’ seem to be preparing for violent confrontations in the wake of “Black Bloc France” who, on April 9, has already called for “a mobilization on Paris” to make May 1st “a day of hell for the persons who defend the system. (...) A day at which destiny will change” (Leaflet of ‘nosotros proletarios’).

Albeit incredulous of the feasibility of the latter prospect, they eagerly contribute an insurrectionist verbiage to this spectacle that mixes imagery from the bourgeois revolution in France at the end of the 18th Century with a reference to a genuine, historic expression of proletarian combativity from a century later: the workers’ mass rally at the Chicago Haymarket on May 4, 1886, the riot and subsequent violent repression of the workers’ struggle for the eight hours’ working day. (2)

This reminiscence to what would become an international rallying cry for the rapidly emerging movement of the industrial proletariat that, at the time, organized in the Socialist International (founded at Paris in 1889), and included the trade unions, can

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1) ‘Parti Communiste International’ (Le Prolétaire),
March 17, 2019: “Assez de simulacres de luttes! Place à la lutte de classe ouverte contre Macron et le capitalisme!”

2) See, for instance: “Haymarket Affair” on Wikipedia.
not dissimulate that the vandalism the ‘proletarios’ are so fond of (3) is as alien to the struggle for proletarian emancipation, as is the theft of luxury goods to a “re-appropriation of means of subsistence” – let alone it would have something to do with the collective appropriation of the means and conditions of production by the immediate producers of social wealth, the waged workers.

Fundamentally, ‘nosotros proletarios’ seem to conceive of the ‘yellow vests’ movement as an intrinsically proletarian movement, rather than as an interclass, people’s movement, which has proletarian tendencies in its midst, for instance expressing themselves trough the demand for a general rise in the minimum wage, and that can get more or less influential. It shares this appreciation with, for instance, ‘Tridni Valka’ in Czechia. (4)

In spite of some points of clarity, like on the present repressive function of the trade unions (but, noblesse oblige, not on their past character as proletarian mass organizations) and on some traps laid out by bourgeois democratic ideology (like the demand for a “Referendum on Citizen’s Initiative” or ‘RIC’), they are prone to the pitfall of isolated, violent confrontations with the repressive forces of the state.

Moreover, the leaflet shows an unsavory smack of megalomania, not quite unfamiliar with a certain strand of anarchism, as the ‘proletarios’ take themselves for... the revolution itself. “We are the coming revolution, we are the final solution of all social contradictions that divide humanity in two antagonistic classes (...)”

In a completely voluntarist bet for “insurrection”, ‘nosotros proletarios’ disqualify themselves as a proletarian group by looking for an alliance with notorious street-fighters (the “black blocs”) who act completely outside of any collective control by a proletarian self-organization, like a workers’ assembly or a strike or action committee, thereby taking part in a military style escalation of social protests and struggles that is only to the advantage of the bourgeois state they pretend to combat.

Henry Cinnamon, April 25, 2019.

CWO/ICT Public Discussion Meeting:
TOWARDS THE FUTURE INTERNATIONAL!

From Iran to Mexico, a rising tide of strike actions across the globe shows that class resistance to the horrors of capitalism is still the “spectre that haunts” the capitalist class.

At the same time we are also encouraged by the appearance of new militants attracted to the ideas of Internationalist Communism — the only alternative to the abyss towards which capitalism is dragging the entire planet.

This meeting aims to deepen and extend that communist understanding in the convinced belief that without a clear communist political organisation the international working class will be left without a compass in the tumult ahead.

The CWO and our comrades in the ICT wrote some years ago: The revolutionary programme serves no purpose at all if it exists only in the minds of a limited number of “thinkers” who are deluded into assuming their ideas are being transmitted “to the class” when they appear in a journal of equally restricted readership, or on the html files of some site on the Internet.

More recently we have written: Our earnest hope is to engage with those new forces which do come to a consciousness of the need to overthrow the system, to give them a political compass, something to rally around, whilst at the same time, we seek dialogue with those forces which already exist to actively cooperate where possible, agree to disagree where necessary, and ultimately to unite as history inexorably moves on and a real class movement develops.

We welcome anyone interested in this vital task to come and discuss with us.

When: Saturday, 11 May 2019, at 3pm
Where: Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Rd, London, WC1X 8JR
Hosted by: Communist Workers’ Organisation
The Algerian Crisis. continued from page 36.

the danger of a regional war. Today, the army is already mobilized on the southern border in the face of the arrival of irregular Islamist forces. Moreover, in the Algerian crisis it moves much faster than its neighbors and the increasingly restless French capital. The Spanish investments in gas, the German investments in assembly plants, the growing presence of Chinese capital, the Italian pressures on Libya’s account, the European policy of migratory control... a multitude of crossed and contradictory imperialist interests play their own strategies in the outcome of the situation. Algeria has the potential to become the scene of an imperialist “every man for himself” that multiplies instability.

And the workers?

For the time being, the leadership of the mobilizations has fallen to the students and the intellectual petty bourgeoisie. The peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie of Kabylia have their own agendas, which they have advanced almost immediately. But the proletariat has lagged behind or remained relatively on the sidelines.

That doesn’t mean that they support Bouteflika, far from it. At this point in history no one is left with any illusions about “Algerian socialism” and its [presumed] love for the workers. The Algerian bourgeoisie has abandoned 25,000 migrants to die in the desert and has shamelessly put the ladle to the Europeans to collect the reward. It keeps bags of Moroccan migrants in extreme precariousness and directly enslaves sub-Saharan migrants to improve margins. After the cholera epidemic, the anger towards the state of most workers is evident. In the course of last year we have seen the long strike of the resident doctors, the teachers’ strike and a multitude of skirmishes, most of them repressed without consideration by the security forces. But everyone’s eyes are on the oil zones, the areas with the largest concentration of workers. The atmosphere in which this crisis has been received is tense and expectant. The combativity is high and any spark – as a few weeks ago, a failed rescue – can quickly turn it into a mass protest.

And now?

The offer of the Algerian state bourgeoisie to calm the petty bourgeoisie is to promise that Bouteflika will neither end the mandate nor “run” for the following elections. That is to say, they ask for time to be able to order their own ranks and prepare an alternative candidate. It is doubtful that this offer, which does not see beyond the concerns of the ruling class itself, serves to create any kind of social consensus. In any case, the only factor that can drive the Algerian crisis towards a solution that is neither sterile nor reactionary, is for the workers to mobilize themselves with their own demands. The shortcomings of the Tunisian mobilizations and the successes of Jerada mass strike lead the way.

Nuevo Curso. March 4, 2019

The theme of this article was chosen for March 4, 2019 by the readers of Nuevo Curso’s news channel on Telegram (@nuevocurso).

Translation: H.C., April 7, 2019

The Algerian Crisis

‘Nuevo Curso’ on the mass protests in the Maghreb

With a country in general uproar, Bouteflika waited until the last moment to present his presidential candidacy. (1) The demonstrators are still on the warpath because they know that the official candidacy wins. (2) But why should the fossilized Algerian bourgeoisie impose a dying Bouteflika who survives on medical care in Geneva?

1) Al Jazeera, March 3, 2019: Bouteflika confirms bid for fifth term amid ongoing protests
2) Ibidem, Amid protests, Algeria’s Bouteflika vows to run for last time.

A history of fragility, an explosive situation

Abdelaziz Bouteflika’s biography is a summary of the history of the Algerian national bourgeoisie constituted in the infamous war of independence, in which the FLN (“National Liberation Front”) and the French state competed for the application of terrorist methods. The resulting state in 1962, idealized by European leftist propaganda, (3) flirted in its early years with the Soviet bloc, following a coup d’Etat in which a young Bouteflika, foreign minister since 1963, was a key element, [but] reoriented itself to a “preferential relationship” with France. Aligned with the “critical” sectors of the almost monolithic Algerian bourgeoisie – who maintained a single-party system for almost three decades – he was only removed from power during the 1980s. The development of the economic crisis at the end of that decade produced a growing discontent of the petty bourgeoisie, culminating in the student revolt of 1988. Bouteflika would then defend the “democratic opening”. But the first free municipal elections ended with the electoral triumph of the “Islamic Salvation Front”, an expression of the radicalization of the petty bourgeoisie in its confrontation with the state bourgeoisie of the FLN. The annulment of the results was followed by a civil war that lasted almost a decade, doubling the economic disaster and [the country’s] dependence on France. It resulted in a new balance between the factions of the former FLN. The new status quo of Algerian state capitalism, imposed by the army, reinstated Bouteflika and put him at the presidency since 1999. Relentlessly presented by the propaganda of the state as the “irreplaceable leader” he has been the guarantor and symbol of the new internal equilibrium and of the imperialist alliances that allowed the military core of the Algerian bourgeoisie to win the war on Islamism.

The necessity of establishing an ironclad authoritarian and monolithic state capitalism from day one, the constant dependence from imperialist alliances with the USSR or France and the difficulties of maintaining the cohesion both of the social whole and within the ruling class, are evidences of the limits of the national liberation model of the 1960s. In Algeria, as everywhere else, political independence could not give way to an independent development of national capital. The very “manna” of hydrocarbons soon became a motor of dependence and the absence of solvent markets prevented the escape of the much wanted diversification that would give productive destinations to the profits from gas and oil. Algeria is a textbook example of the reactionary character of national liberation during the decadence of capitalism.

In addition, if there would be any doubts, Algeria has tried to assert itself as the regional hegemonic imperialism from day one. This applies of course in Libya, where it is a central agent in the course of the civil war today; but above all it does with Morocco, where the old dispute over the Sahara has been been reopened amid mutual accusations, (4) diplomatic insults, an endless arms race (5) and deceitful offers of “direct dialogue” (6) which, in the regional tradition, always precede a new spiral of inter-imperialist conflict. The simultaneous political and economic crisis in Tunisia and Morocco at a time when Libya’s equilibrium is more unstable than ever, and the French war in the Sahel extends to Chad, turns the possible “military solution” of the Algerian situation into

→ Continued on page 35.

3) For instance in the renowned movie “La batalla de Argel” directed by Pontecorvo (YouTube video: https://youtu.be/F8D_80qdxHg).
4) Al Jazeera, May 13, 2018: Morocco accuses Algeria of supporting Iran in Western Sahara feud.
6) Al Jazeera, November 7, 2018: Morocco’s king invites Algeria for ‘frank, direct dialogue’.