

## Against the conceptual dumbing down of the 2016 “movement” in France

Recently, in France as well in Belgium, we've seen an outpouring of all kinds of slippery semantic hijacking of the meaning of many concepts and categories of the revolutionary workers' movement. Once full of meaning for revolutionary proletarians, words such as “strike”, “indefinite strike” and “insurrectionary strike”, “class violence”, “revolt”, “blocking the economy”, “occupation of productive territories”, “sabotage”, “general assembly” and “direct democracy”, “the movement” and its “base committees”, are now emptied of their subversive content. They are represented in bastardized forms or their purpose is completely inverted. They have become harmless caricatures of real class struggle.

The absence of a favourable balance of forces (or at least one not openly unfavourable) is compensated for by the verbal escalation surrounding these sham struggles. Instead of acknowledging the failure or, worse, the lack of combativeness of the proletariat, and trying to understand why, the unions who present themselves as confrontational - CGT and Sud in France and FGTB-CGSP in Belgium<sup>1</sup> – and their Stalinist, Trotskyist and “autonomous” supporters are competing to see who is verbally more “radical”. There are no strikes? So let's go for a “general strike”. There is no general strike? Let's make it into an “insurrectionary strike” and if not let's “block the economy”, or “set out for... the revolution!” There is no sit-in in places of production by the workers? So let's occupy roads or squares...

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<sup>1</sup> The Belgian case is striking. The unions have occupied media space throughout 2015, making some people think that Belgium is undergoing a wave of strikes. But the actual figures put the media circus in its rightful place. According to the Belgian newspaper *L'Écho*, 17 June 2016, the year 2015 only saw 207,563 days lost (including all strikes and demonstrations) while there had been 760,297 days lost in 2014. 2015 is one of the least strike-prone years since 1991.

Our wordy agitators blithely move from the “strike” by proxy<sup>2</sup> to the substitution of the strike itself. Evocations of struggle have taken the place of real and massive struggles that, unfortunately, do not exist. Therefore, when these theatrical substitutes for mass workers' struggles take the form of ultra-minority actions with no hope of growing, they reinforce the belief among other proletarians that the only concrete goal of these actions is to annoy them in their daily life, whether at work or as unemployed.

In this context full of false pretences, where the shadows of what was the class struggle dance on the podium of capital's domination, it is essential to restore the true meaning of these words, which have been abused, watered down, overused, words that have nevertheless defined and conceptually structured the independent worker's movement.

### **The strike emptied of its *raison d'être***

The strike is a fundamental moment in the social relation based on wage labour. It is the first expression of class antagonism that develops regularly between the workers and the bosses. The strike is the translation into action of the fact that profit and wages are historically in inverse relation to each other: an increase in one means a decrease in the other<sup>3</sup>. The strike is the founding act of class autonomy, the first step towards the making of the exploited class into a class for itself, not just for capital.

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<sup>2</sup> A harmful idea invented in November-December 1995 during the rail and RATP workers' struggle against the abolition of the special pension scheme. It justified the fact that the strike was not happening outside the SNCF and RATP lines (or on a small scale, as in La Poste, EDF and GDF). See the supplement to the Worker Bulletin no. 1 (in French).

[http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/Archives/WorkerBulletin/bo\\_1\\_su\\_pp.pdf](http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/Archives/WorkerBulletin/bo_1_su_pp.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Though there are periods where the increase in profit goes along with an increase in wages.

*“Inverse relationship between profit and wage. Antagonism between two classes for which profit and wage are economic existence” (Marx, 1847, Wage labour and capital, Appendix on wage. Point 4<sup>4</sup>)*

The strike therefore only makes sense when its dynamic attracts and pulls in growing sections of the exploited class and is only effective in so far as it is able to stop the production of goods and, thus, to affect profit generation, and therefore the reproduction of capital.

The capitalist mode of production (CMP) imposes and perpetuates itself as the dominant mode of production through the generalization of the valorisation of capital and the transformation of all social production into increased capital. Social production affirms itself as the place of the creation of new value that transforms itself into capital. For that purpose, a commodity has to realize its value in the circulation sphere through its most universal and abstract form, that of money. The metamorphosis of the new value hides its origin rooted in surplus labour, the portion of social labour that the collective worker gives to the employer and that exceeds the part remunerated by the salary. The exploitation of the collective worker happens in the places of production of new value.

The strike aims to interrupt the process of creation of new value, to prevent the production and/or the realization of the value in the places where this happens, whether it's factories, warehouses, offices or supermarkets.

The interruption of social production and reproduction of capital is a formidable weapon at the disposal of the workers. It's a weapon that, when used with intelligence, hits the Achilles heel of the CMP and, therefore, its domination over the whole of society. The strike has the power to dissolve the social relationship of capital. That is why any independent strike able to interrupt the production and/or realisation process of value contains a strong political potential that affirms itself even more explicitly when the strike extends itself, puts down roots and includes more and

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<sup>4</sup> See the whole text (appendix 4 does not exist in English): <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/index.htm>

more workers in struggle. Opposing the defensive struggle (the so-called economic strike) to the autonomous political dynamic of class included in all its independent strike movements has no meaning except when you are working for the established order by bringing the class struggle back to the normality of exploitation<sup>5</sup>.

*“And in this way, out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a political movement, that is to say a movement of the class, with the object of achieving its interests in a general form, in a form possessing a general social force of compulsion. If these movements presuppose a certain degree of previous organisation, they are themselves equally a means of the development of this organisation.” (Marx “Letter to Bolte”<sup>6</sup>)*

When the proletariat seizes the strike weapon, the ruling classes try by every means to repair the social bond between labour and capital, including trying to divert the class struggle into acceptable forms of conflict with the help of state unions and “worker friendly” capitalist parties.

If the true efficacy of a strike resides in its ability to block the process of production and realisation of value, then it must involve an increasing, and preferably significant, number of workers in the fight.

We don't dream of a generalized mobilisation of the proletariat against capital. We know that the initial stage of the struggle is most often the act of workers' minorities. However, the immediate goal of these determined minorities is to attract as many worker comrades as possible into active participation in the movement. Without that, the movement will never succeed in opposing itself to capital, as the first expression of a new social relationship, antagonistic to value and its dictatorship. When the dynamic of extension and rootedness is not there, the strike loses all effectiveness and, above all, has no chance of foreshadowing a different relationship

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<sup>5</sup>See Letter no.11: “Unions and Political struggle”.

<http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Letters/LTMC0311EN.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> 23 November 1871. See: [https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/letters/71\\_1\\_1\\_23.htm](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/letters/71_1_1_23.htm)

between producers, that is to say anticipating the liberation from wage labour.

Yet, ultra-minority strikes coupled with “oceanic” lazy protests, supposed to bear witness to the support of the majority of workers still at work because they were in a situation where it was “impossible to strike without losing their jobs”, punctuated the so-called movement in France against the labour law. Then there were a long series of strikes in the form of flea bites which never “blocked the economy”. According to the bank HSBC, the agitation against the labour law had an effect on French GDP of a miniscule 0.1% in the third quarter of 2016. In 1995, the fall of GDP attributed to the strike (of 23 days) by the Institute of State Statistics was double: 0.2% in the fourth quarter.

The micro-strikes have therefore not done much harm to French capital but they have progressively eroded the generic sympathy expressed in the polls by the wage earning population, whose working and living conditions have been under attack for a long time by capital and its state.

In France, the myth of the strike by proxy or delegation was quickly dissolved in the long queues on the roads, in the crowded stations without trains, in the piles of stinking rubbish in working-class neighbourhoods. A strike whose low intensity can be measured by how quickly order was restored, notwithstanding the funeral demonstration on June 14, described as “enormous” by the leaders of the CGT.

### **The general strike as a preventive burial of autonomous struggles**

According to the proponents of the 2016 “movement” in France, the general strike – more or less unlimited, with or without insurrectionary highpoints – would be the crowning of ultra-minority strikes added to one another. It was an idea that quickly fizzled out, and gave way to the “monster” demonstration of June 14, the last stand of the CGT, which essentially ended the agitation. The inability to transform the weak ultra-minority strikes into a real mass movement of work stoppages, extended and hegemonic within the proletariat, is not due to the lack of will of trade unions and anti-establishment parties.

The general strike, like any other visible manifestation of the class struggle, is not a question of the will of supposed political leaders. We recently wrote in our text about “Nuit Debout” (Standing at Night):

*“The mobilisation of the whole of the proletariat is the consequence of the rise in strength of struggles and mass agitations everywhere that the proletariat lives and works. These fights against capital and its appendages constituted by the unions and the leftie bourgeois parties can only develop themselves in stages, unifying as they reinforce each other. The general strike described here presupposes in the end a rootedness in productive territories of autonomous organisations of the class.”<sup>7</sup>*

If this course is not taken, the general strike can become its opposite: a tool to reabsorb and exhaust the most advanced aspects of the class struggle, a tool in the hands of trade unionist and political intermediate bodies of the state who drown any real movement in the low-intensity mass agitations they control. The example of May 1968 in France is a living confirmation of this. From 14 to 18 May a minority movement had started outside the union framework. Following this the unions and left parties called for a general strike which was of exceptional length (from 18 to 30 May – date of the beginning of its decline) so as to contain the movement. This general strike had hardly any effect in terms of amplifying and generalising struggles. On the contrary, because of its specificities and the non-appearance of an autonomous organisation of the class, it led to the exhaustion of the initial impulse.

The Sorelian and anarcho-sindicalist conceptions of the general strike sowed the illusion of a collapse of capitalism by the simple effect of stopping work. This idea of the general strike saw capitalism falling like ripe fruit from the total blockade of the economy. Refuted many times in the past, this vision minimises, even eliminates, the insurrectional moment of the revolutionary process. Yet this moment is crucial because it determines, if properly conducted, the

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<sup>7</sup>See Bulletin no. 10: “Standing at night, or taking it lying down?”

<http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/BLT16024ENVF.pdf>

collapse of the repressive apparatus of the state and the affirmation of workers' power<sup>8</sup>.

Throughout its long history of more than two hundred years workers' movement has known both generalizations of strikes bearing an independent political development of the class and formal extensions of struggles resulting in the drowning of the combative sectors in the ocean of passivity of the great mass of workers – and often leading to aggressive anti-proletarian policies. Contrary to the Sorelian and anarcho-sindicalist myth, the general strike has in itself no specific value that would place it above other forms of autonomous struggle of the exploited class.

The general strike no longer has the cathartic power to awaken to class struggle the great oppressed masses plunged into the lethargy of social peace and individualism. Unfortunately, it's this kind of idealistic interpretation which is so current today.

The general strike is therefore an important form of struggle but it is to be handled with care. This calls for two remarks.

The call for a general strike is an action of great complexity that requires a tremendous preparation, and presupposes being able to size up the enemy forces. It's necessary to precisely decide the timing of the struggle so as to not allow the class enemy to set up its defences. In 1926, the British ruling classes made use of information about the general strike to give themselves the means to win.

If we assume that the movement that actually makes possible a general strike resides in solidly self-organised workers' committees linked to each other, forged in the fight in more limited

class struggle activities, then why should they throw all their forces into a single battle? Even if they do, we should understand that the question cannot be reduced to a beautiful prolonged refusal of work. Every class struggle is a war of movement.

A general strike presupposes a high degree of political independence of the proletariat and a strong and capillary autonomous organisation of the class, able to interrupt the valorisation of capital in its essential nodes. Finally, the general strike to which we refer is by no means about demands, its content is not purely "economic". It asks for nothing, it imposes. This form of struggle serves to consolidate and to spread the workers' power won by means of a merciless confrontation between the dominant and exploited classes. Thus, the general strike of which we speak is nothing if it is not political and if it does not fit in with the other forms of the workers' struggle, legal and illegal.

### **The parody of the insurrectional general strike played out by the fringe affinity groups**

The so called radical groups that have plunged head first into the union trap thought they could free themselves of it by verbal escalation and, occasionally, by engaging in violent "excesses" without much conviction. Some of them call for revolution, others try to capitalise on "hatred of the cops". All are distinguished by their total externality to and ignorance of the productive territories they claim to "block" by their confused initiatives. For them, productive territories are only seen as playgrounds for their aggressive childishness.

We need to say a bit more about the myth of blocking the economy. Here, it is first of all a question of the problematic of violence carried out on the fringes. "Excesses" correctly describes them. According to their practitioners, the goal is to turn peaceful demonstrations into opportunities for confrontation with the forces of repression, to destroy street furniture, billboards, storefronts and windows of banks. The silly side of all this is not even worthy of attention. In contrast, the "cop hunting" carried out by small affinity groups requires further elaboration.

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<sup>8</sup> When the anarchists replied victoriously to the fascist coup of July 1936, in Barcelona, it was not by the general strike but by patient military preparation, the monitoring of the army barracks and the arming of the proletariat, organised by the *Nosotros* group. Conversely, the Basel congress in 1912 of the Second International provides a good negative example of what social democracy at that time meant by the general strike. Following many other conventions, the Basel one decided on the immediate triggering of a general strike in case of war in all the belligerent countries. Despite this, in 1914, almost the entire Second International and most anarchists ended up siding with their respective bourgeoisies. The formal and bureaucratic slogan of the "general strike" had already served as a scarecrow and a repellent against any real class politics.

Proletarian violence is often exerted against the forces of the established order<sup>9</sup>. It affirms the order of the fight against wage labour against the order of work. Led by mobile well-organised groups of workers, this type of violence has the aim of neutralising the forces responsible for maintaining capitalist order and affirming proletarian order. Its purpose is not to take revenge against police violence and to eliminate men in uniform. It is a planned exercise of force, strictly inscribed within the plan of workers' power. It is an exercise of force that rejects the conception of violence as an expression of personal hatred, however justified, against the guard dogs of the established order<sup>10</sup>. Proletarian violence has nothing in common with states of mind, with a conception of revolt as an existential attitude.

In addition, any exercise of proletarian force must be intelligible to the vast majority of the oppressed and exploited. Private wars are not a battleground for the revolutionary proletariat since class violence is itself an expression of the class movement and nothing else. Revolutionary violence must be the expression of a new social relation.

When there is no movement, that is to say when the order of capital reigns unchallenged in the productive territories, individual violence loses all social reason, all legitimacy. It becomes, on the contrary, an involuntary support to the capitalist order, a repellent against autonomous struggles. This is exactly what happened again and again at union demos against the labour law in France. Hundreds of young people gathered simply on the basis of wanting to do battle against the cops and imposed their law, at the head or at the end of the demonstrations, on the peaceful, or even hostile, majority of participants. These people have played to some extent the game of

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<sup>9</sup>See Letter n°36: "Workers violence doesn't always mean workers autonomy."

<http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Letters/LTMC1336ENvF.pdf>

<sup>10</sup>"*Dialectic materialism does not know dualism between means and end. The end flows naturally from the historical movement. Organically the means are subordinated to the end. The immediate end becomes the means for a further end*". (Leon Trotsky, "Their morals and ours. Dialectic Interdependence of End and Means", 1938

<https://www.marxists.org/francais/trotsky/livres/morale/morale16.htm>

the so called oppositional state unions, giving them newspaper headlines and TV coverage on a plate. It's a miserable palliative for the weakness of their agitation in the productive territories. Instead of trying to build a path independent of the big union mass, these young people have accepted the timetable and the rules of the unions for the mobilisation by practicing these ridiculous "excesses". There's no class revolt in all this, just an individual letting off of steam, doomed to be severely repressed by the state. Class revolt draws its strength from its capacity to deconstruct the capitalist order in the productive territories and is only conceivable as an organised and independent expression of the proletariat in movement.

The present call for a "popular uprising"<sup>11</sup> has nothing to do with the events of the past which it claims to refer to. Two examples:

- In Asturias, Spain, in October 1934<sup>12</sup>. The armed insurrection of large masses of proletarians germinated in the general strike of almost all the factories and mines of the province. The column of armed miners from the Mieres region marched on Oviedo. The proletariat had established a red army 30,000 strong. Yet this glorious episode of the proletariat in Spain was militarily defeated by the troops and mercenaries of the Republic and the Foreign Legion led by Franco. The fight was left completely isolated by the left parties and trade unions. They were the ones responsible for having suspended at the last moment the outbreak of the so-called "peaceful general strike" in other areas of the country. The cost was heavy: 5,000 comrades killed and 70,000 imprisoned.
- The insurrectional general strike in the Ruhr, from 13 March to 17 April 1920 as a prolongation of the national general strike triggered in reaction to the Kapp

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<sup>11</sup>This slogan was used by some participants to *Nuit Debout* (Standing at night), in Paris, coupled to the call to be inspired by the Paris Commune of 1871. The poor communards, with such mediocre heirs!

<sup>12</sup>For more details, see the book by Manuel Grossi: "The Asturian Uprising: Fifteen Days of Socialist Revolution" Socialist Platform; First Edition (2000).

Putsch from 13 to 17 March 1920. It was supported by the ADGB union leader, the socialist Legien. Eager to take revenge for the defeats of 1919, proletarians built their Red Army of 50,000 to 80,000 combatants<sup>13</sup>. After the first local victories, the armed workers could not go on the offensive and were surrounded by the German army<sup>14</sup>. This inability to launch an offensive was the result of the accepted presence, within the political and military bodies of the insurrection, of the left parties SPD, USPD and KPD. The latter pleaded for political conciliation and were profoundly divided amongst themselves, each with their own headquarters. From then on, the defeat was inevitable. The repression led to 2,000 deaths in our ranks.

Quickly recalling these two high points of class struggle is enough to understand the abyss that separates them from the current pitiful sham.

### **Blocking one gate of a wholesale market or going for a walk on the ring road is not enough to block the economy**

“Blocking the economy” is fashionable in trade union marches. The less real are the strikes, the more this scarecrow is waved. And to give a vague substance to this verbiage the unions opposed to the labour law launch lightning raids, essentially mobilising trade union militants and leftists in need of action<sup>15</sup>. These operations are expected to strike at the heart of the capitalist economy in France<sup>16</sup>. Here are two examples:

- On 28 April 2016, about 200 people (the majority of them students of Paris 8 with unionists from SUD and CGT) blocked, from 5:30 to 8:00, a roundabout entrance in the port area of Gennevilliers by burning tires. Dispersed by police, 75 of them were arrested on their return to the Carrefour Pleyel metro station.
- On 9 June 2016, about 500 people responded to the call of the CGT (local union of the 94 county, Air France, etc.) and blocked from 3:00 to 6:00, one of the four gates to the Market of National Interest (MIT) Rungis. They then left in procession along Route Nationale 7 to Orly airport.

The “blockade of the economy” practiced by the unions and their subsidiary leftists is limited to temporarily impeding the circulation of people and, very occasionally, that of certain categories of commodities such as food. Factories continue to run, banks work perfectly despite their broken windows, the shops are full of goods and, apart from selective shortages of petrol in some areas, everything continues working for capital. These actions do not bother the employers or the government at all. However, they can create irritation for workers who suffer the unpleasant consequences of this political circus.

We have already set out what a strike means for revolutionaries: stop the production and circulation of value. A strike has the aim of transforming territories and places of production and circulation of goods into bastions of workers’ order, into zones of non-law for capital, its State and its agents. The economy is the expression of social relationship where bosses and landlords dominate. In order to block it, one must dissolve that social relationship in the acid of the independent class struggle. The “social bond” linking the worker to capital should be cut where it is the strongest: in the factory, at the office, in the warehouse, wherever this link directly serves to generate or realize the value produced by the collective worker. There is no “blocking of the economy” without massive strikes, without a permanent agitation in places of exploitation, without systematically calling into question the

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<sup>13</sup>Among references about these events, see: “Un rebelle dans la révolution Max Hölz”, Editions Spartacus. and “The Communist Left in Germany, 1918-1921”, D. Authier and G. Dauvé, 2006.

<sup>14</sup>The army was helped on the west side by the Belgian and French occupying troops.

<sup>15</sup>Another confirmed case is the opportunistic use of the situation by some unions, like the pilots of Air France, to defend corporatist interests that have nothing to do with the labour law.

<sup>16</sup>*Mouvement Communiste* has itself used this slogan in propaganda during the first Iraq war. At the time, we had to underline that the only way to stop capitalist wars is to prevent capital from developing by transforming the war into international class war. So, nothing to do with the current context. See the 1990 leaflet (in French) “*Pour arrêter la guerre, il faut arrêter l’économie*”.

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[http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/tract\\_9009\\_pas\\_de\\_guerre\\_sans\\_production\\_capitaliste.pdf](http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/tract_9009_pas_de_guerre_sans_production_capitaliste.pdf)

command of the enterprise, without the concrete affirmation of workers' power as an antagonistic social relation that grows from the ashes of capitalist social relations.

### **Direct democracy in a bogus general assembly, the degeneration of bourgeois formal democracy**

To sweeten the pill of the absence of the vast majority of workers from the agitation against the labour law, the oppositional unions and their leftist supporters put forward direct democracy, hoping, in passing, to capitalize on the rejection of “politics” and its organizations. Suddenly, sovereign general assemblies bloom, as well as struggle committees, coordinations, promoters of horizontal convergences of struggle, etc. In reality, none of these so called base organisations are any of these things. The GAs are attended by union representatives and largely deserted by the workers.

An example? At Saint-Lazare railway station, the GAs have gathered on average 50 to 90 rail workers, mostly trade union and/or political activists. The one exception: the first GA on 2 June brought together 180 workers from a possible 3,500<sup>17</sup>.

The existing struggle committees are the creations of leftists who hide their intentions from the workers. Coordinations have nothing to coordinate and gather the same militants as in the bogus GAs and phantom committees – all this to fake up an independent political life of the exploited class that does not exist right now. As if it was enough to manufacture its organisation to make it happen...

Instead of being an essential moment of collective political maturation of the working class, these “GAs”, committees and other organisations are echo chambers for decisions and directions already taken by the political and union apparatuses which inspired them. Exactly as happens in bourgeois parliaments. The form can't

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<sup>17</sup> The Paris Saint-Lazare region has 4,015 staff (2015 figures). There were three GAs: Achères, Mantes-la-jolie and Saint-Lazare. The Saint-Lazare GA gathered staff from the Technicentres (Levallois, suburban trains, and Clichy, equipment), commercial services, controllers, transport police, switchmen, shunters and administration, of which there were around 3,500.

change the content and, above all, its social nature. The workers' organization is always an expression of the class movement, never the lever which brings it into being. And even when the proletarian movement is real, no form of organization is in itself a guarantee that it takes the right path and that adopts a good plan of attack. Opposing, as the leftists do, the “base”, healthy by definition, to the “top”, corrupt by definition, through the “direct expression” of the people adds an extra element of confusion and eventually reinforces, on its ruins, confidence in bourgeois formal democracy. We only have to think of the inoperative chaos of the GAs of “Nuits debout” to understand that.

Must we reject all forms of direct democracy? Not at all. But it is essential that it is the product of a real movement against the dominant productive order, directly and actively involving major sectors of the class. In this case, the GAs, the committees that bring together the most determined and farsighted workers minorities, the coordinations of autonomous struggles can become essential places of collective elaboration of the plan of attack against capital, irreplaceable tools of the political consciousness of the proletariat.

### **The obligatory passage of workers' autonomy**

The so-called movement of 2016 in France, like its equivalent in Belgium, ended up demoralising the fighting will of the small minorities of proletarians who had gone for action. Worse, these two trade unionist episodes deepened the gulf separating these minorities from the great mass of workers. From striking by proxy, it went to striking which provokes indifference, and then hostility, despite polls showing support from most of the population. It cannot be denied that employees completely rejected this new law, decrees and collective agreements which will weaken them in the face of the bosses and the state. The polls have shown this throughout these “movements”. But public opinion surveys are not reality, just as elections aren't. Both of them take account of the opinions of the whole population, not the will of proletarians to do battle. What's more, the political effect of opinion polls is to transform everything into a brawl between the parties of capital. How else can we interpret the

fact that Front national voters in France are ferociously opposed to the labour law in proportions comparable to sympathisers of the Front de Gauche<sup>18</sup>?

The harsh reality is that in France and Belgium the proletariat in its great majority remains imprisoned in the net of capitalist social relations, in the strong mesh of wage labour. The class struggle does not rule. It is not enough that minorities go into movement for the movement to attract the active support of the proletarian masses. Above all, this N<sup>th</sup> episode in the tumultuous relations between some state unions and the government shows that the course of independent class struggle does not go through these comic opera mobilisations called by the intermediate bodies of the state.

Attempts at workers' autonomy in the historic conditions of the integration of the old workers' movement into the state has to involve the preliminary identification of the parties and unions of the left of the state as essential organs of capitalist order. The logic of contestation inside the official union federations, which leads combative minorities to act as spurs for the left parties and unions, with the aim that they act in contradiction with the institutional function given them by capital is the surest and quickest road to new defeats.

The political independence of the proletariat constructs itself in the struggles of sections of the class which free themselves from all the constraints of the political and/or trade union "united front" and the insignificant tactics of the "excesses" inscribed in the agenda defined by the unions and parties of capital assigned to the conflictual management of the capitalist social relation. This political independence of the proletariat we call for will be born in everyday struggles against the domination of capital and will strengthen itself by creating its own organs in and by struggle. The most important mission of these organs is to promote the political dimension

of every fight against the material conditions of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

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<sup>18</sup> According to an IFOP poll for *Dimanche Ouest France* published on Saturday 18 June, some 78% of supporters of the *Front national* considered the mobilisation to be "justified". Those of the *Front de Gauche* (French CP and the *Parti de Gauche*) supported it at a level of 90%.