

## WORKERS' VIOLENCE DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN WORKERS' AUTONOMY

*“This terrible event should remind us that the exercise of force is only a tool (and not a neutral one) which, in certain circumstances, the movement can or must seize. In itself, violent action does not have any political value. It can, as was the case for the episode of Marfin bank, be transformed into an extremely harmful instrument. Used as it was here, it is only the expression of a terrible vacuity of thought and in no way an expression of collective strength. The use of this tool must therefore always be carefully weighed up. If proletarian organisation is never a luxury but a permanent necessity of the class struggle, concerted and well prepared collective action is the condition sine qua non of any initiative involving force.*

*The exercise of force is a constant characteristic of any independent proletarian expression, from a simple assembly, to a strike, an occupation, a demonstration and much more. The recognition of this state of affairs must not hide, or make us underestimate, the dangers involved in its use. One thing amongst others which we must beware of is the constitution of a separate and specialised corps.*

*The eventual targets of the movement must be pursued with the maximum of rigour and organisation so as to avoid at any cost “accidents” of the type which happened here. The exaltation of spontaneity and destruction, in this domain or elsewhere, is in itself pernicious. The avalanche of daft explanations about who’s responsible (fascist or police provocation) and who’s guilty (the boss for sure, non-striking employees) only demonstrate the lack of political intelligence of the milieus who claim to be so revolutionary. These are the same milieus who made themselves the noble heroes of the revolt of December 2008.” MC Letter no. 32<sup>1</sup>.*

To answer questions on violence, the text which follows comprises:

- A part which sets out our basic principles on the question,
- Studies of three recent examples:
  - Lonmin (South Africa, July-August 2012),
  - Suzuki Maruti (India, July 2012)
  - Foxconn (China, September 2012)
- A tentative conclusion.

## WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

The question of violence is often misunderstood. *“Violence is neither good nor bad, it just is”* as has been written in the past<sup>2</sup>.

According to Marx, it is an economic force when it is a massive collective expression. By violence, territories and resources were conquered, peoples and classes were subdued, and domination over labour and the products of society was extended. Thus, according to an old refrain, violence is the continuation of politics. From the point of view of the working class, the political form of its independent fight is a necessity which corresponds to its dual nature as a class of this world and as a revolutionary class. We wrote recently:

*“[The class which is] dispossessed of everything but from which, in the end, everything comes, including political power (the dictatorship of the ruling classes under various guises). Though carrying superior social content, a mode of reproduction of humanity at last freed from oppression, the working-class must give a political form to its movement.*

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<sup>1</sup> “Greece: the fiscal crisis of the state puts the need for an independent workers’ politics on the agenda”, May 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Article in *Potere operaio*, no. 3, 2-9 October 1969.

*The political form imposes itself because of the double nature of the class: in this world as a class, but with a central ability to overthrow it. The political form fits in with its duality and with a social organization wholly in accordance with capital. Contrary to the other revolutionary classes of the past, the proletariat doesn't possess any other means of production except its own labour power. That means it can't gradually emancipate itself from today's mode of production, and thus can't avoid a frontal confrontation with the state that concentrates the power of the dominant social relations.*

*Of course, when we use the word "politics" we don't mean the definition given by the bourgeoisie, the art of mediation and compromise. The workers' revolution is the practical criticism of all "tacticism" and of tactics as a group of actions intended for finding a middle ground inside the present framework. The tactic is the proper answer for defensive struggles, not for the workers' political autonomy. On the contrary, the revolutionary proletariat must take up a destructive strategy of breaking up the concentrated powers of capitalist social relations, and then the state.*

*A pure political creation, the modern state structures civil society in the image of the capitalist production from which it comes. From the other side, capital's civil society entrusts to the state the ultimate responsibility for the good global functioning of the system and delegates to it the privilege, indeed the monopoly, of the mediation between the classes that make it up."<sup>3</sup>*

As the political form of rupture with capitalism and of all societies divided into classes of which it is an expression, proletarian violence can itself become a source of alienation from the goal of communism.

*"The aim is the emancipation of the working class and the overthrow (transformation) of society which this implies. A historic evolution can only remain "peaceful" as long as it does not encounter violent obstacles from the social class possessing power"<sup>4</sup>.*

While the political form of the class struggle cannot be ignored, its violent expression is not indispensable in principle, up to the moment where the dominant classes decide to oppose the communist social transformation with all their strength. But experience has systematically taught the revolutionary proletariat that violence is an unavoidable part of its process of liberation. The reversibility between a peaceful movement and a violent movement is from now on inscribed clearly in the history of the working class. The enemies of the proletariat, on the other hand, try every time to deny this reversibility to deprive the revolutionary class of one of its political weapons.

*"The "peaceful" movement can change itself into a "violent" movement in the case where the men concerned with maintaining the old order rebel; if the revolt is repressed by force (as in the civil war in the United States and in the French Revolution); it is because these men are rebels who oppose themselves to "legal" force"<sup>5</sup>*

A new "legality" asserts itself in the movement of liberation, the old regime tries to maintain itself by imposing the previous "legality" by force, and insurgent proletarians in their turn violently defend the new order which they are in the process of building by their struggle and in their struggle. These moments belong to any revolutionary process: *"It's the fatal prelude to violent revolutions – the old story but always new"<sup>6</sup>*. But it's necessary to respect the sequence of events.

Starting from the moment where the proletariat (including outside periods of struggle, which means all the proletarians) is the victim of expropriation (necessarily violent), contrary to the bourgeoisie, whose existence rests on expropriation which it benefits from, the proletariat is not violent in itself, even if it is too often ruled by the violence of innumerable inter-individual conflicts generated by the oppression, submission and exploitation which it is subjected to.

This type of proletarian violence is reactionary and needs to be fought by all means because it deepens the divisions within the class. As for collective political violence, it is not a choice but a course of action which is obligatory in certain circumstances. *"An insurrection would be folly where peaceful agitation could accomplish everything quickly and surely"<sup>7</sup>*. Proletarian violence must not renounce its *raison d'être*, nor the ultimate aim that it pursues: a society in which all humans will be

<sup>3</sup> Unpublished MC text "For a definition of the proletarian political cycle".

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx, "Marginal notes on the debates in the Reichstag relating to the antisocialist law, sittings from 16 to 17 September 1878".

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Marx, *The New York World*, 18 July 1871.

free and will share a common aim by common means. This point is central: the first practical critique of violence resides in the manner in which concentrated force is exercised. *“The revolution must be united”*, continued Marx in 1872, in Amsterdam<sup>8</sup>.

But we should not look for any sort of pacifism in Marx. When he wrote all these texts in 1871, before during and after the Commune (the Commune whose failure he could foresee while pushing communists to participate in it), it was a matter of criticising all those who were seized by the fever of insurrection.

Let’s remember that insurrection cannot be “decreed”. The bourgeoisie, on the contrary, chose the date, place and order of attack which would bring about the insurrection (October in Petrograd was not an insurrection, but rather a “coup d’état”). Before even considering an insurrection, it is more important for a growing revolutionary movement to enlarge its base as far as possible, with the aim of reinforcing its capacity.

As for the solidarity which he spoke about in 1872, it was not a question of the solidarity of those who are not struggling towards those who are struggling, but of those who claim that common action is certainly necessary but far from being sufficient. The content of the struggle, its objectives and means are far more important determining factors. A class which aspires to transform things on a global scale most show proof of the highest qualities, of being without faults, showing proof of an ethic.

If a specific organisation is indispensable, then it must be ruled by criteria and “values” (this collection of values constitutes an “ethics” of the proletariat<sup>9</sup>) which as far away as possible from those of the dominant classes which it is fighting. Torture, bodily and mental humiliations, including of enemies, the spirit of the barracks and specialisations (which through force of repetition become the one blinkered horizon for those who carry them out) must be banished from the outset from the proletarian camp. However, the real antidote to the militarist deviation is the absolute dependence of violent collective action (of a minority or by the wider masses, it doesn’t matter as long as it is functional to the revolutionary process) to the concrete objectives of liberation that the proletariat is consciously attached to. Proletarian violence (therefore its specific organisation) must remain a variable dependant on the independent political struggle. It is not a question of organisation therefore but of a collective consciousness of the aims and the means for achieving them.

The working class will only liberate itself by *“economic means which suppress its character as wage labour, and therefore as a class. With its total victory it finishes this domination, and so its class character disappears”*, continued Marx in his text criticising Bakunin in 1874<sup>10</sup>. Political violence does not have this faculty of stopping wage labour. It is just one of the means by which the proletariat can intervene in a dictatorial fashion on the plane of relations of production, distribution (in short, the economy) to break the chain of exploitation and then to scuttle its own ship from a class point of view. Proletarian violence opens up spaces which would not be accessible otherwise. These spaces must be filled with a class activity capable of anticipating completely new social relations, founded on cooperation, mutual aid and an organisation of society without classes. Where this is not the case, collective proletarian violence is nothing but the expression of a weakness of the movement towards submission to the human relations instilled by exploitation and oppression.

It is in this framework that we need to understand often misleading notions, false oppositions between so-called vanguard violence and so-called mass violence, or between defensive and offensive violence. A violent act carried out by a large number of individuals is not necessarily better and more right. In the same way, the fact that violence is carried out by conscious revolutionaries scarcely signifies that they are in line with the movement of liberation of the proletariat. Thus, defensive violence is not more or less legitimate than a preventive action. The old debate between those who go

<sup>8</sup> Marx, speech in Amsterdam, 8 September 1872.

<sup>9</sup> Ethics (from the Greek ηθική [επιστήμη], “moral science”, from ηθος (“ethos”), “way of life, habit, customs; character, condition of the soul, psychic disposition” and from the Latin *ethicus* (morals) is a philosophical discipline that is practical (relating to action) and normative (relating to rules) in a natural and human environment. The aim which it sets itself is to indicate how humans should behave, act and be between themselves and towards those around them.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Marx, “Conspectus of Bakunin’s *Statism and Anarchy*”, 1874.

for the combination workers' self-defence/mass violence and those who advocate attack by conscious minorities must be superseded by the yardstick of these considerations.

Violence is the product of society divided into classes, and all classes exercise it against each other and amongst themselves to various degrees:

- On the side of the dominant class, there is certainly the state and all its specialised organs without even talking about the general violence of implicit social relations<sup>11</sup>.
- On the side of the other classes there is inter-individual violence, the war of all against all which is practiced to various degrees. Moreover this violence is never eradicated by the organs of the state because they serve a double purpose. Firstly, to worsen the everyday life of isolated proletarians and to justify the existence of the police. Secondly, even if the state doesn't create this violence (by encouraging one or other of its forms) it knows perfectly how to use them for its own objectives: urban renewal (as in Paris in the 1970s and 1980s like in *Ilot Chalon*) is accelerated when the police divert drug dealing into one neighbourhood and not another, and drug dealing is used by the state to crush neighbourhood working class organisations (as in Milan where, starting in 1976, heroin and the activities associated with dealing were used to crush the tenants' committees of *Quartiero Oggiaro*)

We don't want to say that in communist society all conflicts will disappear. On the contrary, conflict will always exist but it will no longer be mediated by specialised organs and by collective violence. Our absence of an angelic vision of inter-individual relations in communism is certainly an assertion. But on the contrary, how can we think that tensions, oppositions, between even social individuals can totally disappear? What could justify this permanent harmony? Then, how will conflicts be resolved? Can we say with absolute certainty that means of conciliation, of self-pacification will be effective?

In the same way that work is the alienated form of human activity, violence is the alienated form of human conflicts. The end of alienation<sup>12</sup>, only possible in and by communism, will reveal the capacity of the species and of the individuals who compose it to produce their existence without mediation.

## WHAT FORMS DOES IT TAKE TODAY?

It can be social, collective or individual. It uses or doesn't use "tools", of which the most specialised are arms. It can be exercised when there is equality in the number of participants on both sides or it can be unbalanced. For what interests us, workers' struggle understood in the broad sense, it can accelerate an ascending course or it can block it, as when it can prepare the organised response in the case of defeat.

A strike, even a peaceful one, is a refusal which violently breaks the existing social order in the factory. A strike can be violent even without the workers being armed. The marches of workers which swept through the big factories of the Italian peninsula<sup>13</sup>, by forcing the foremen or the scabs to take part, exercised a violence aimed at annihilating the power which these "victims" had when the life of the factory operated according to the rhythms of capital. In this habitual framework, the authority of the individual "chief" (resting on the productive organisation and the hierarchy) is only that of a, certainly often diffuse, implicit violence.

Social violence needs specialised corps to maintain it, for when its objective machinery (the organisation of productive and social life) is no longer sufficient to maintain its habitual functioning. Its specialised corps in social democratic countries act as much in a preventive role as they do in a corrective one. But let's remember that it is the whole social organisation which exercises an implicit violence. From the state to the family, via the factory: there is no need to put a gun to the head of

<sup>11</sup> What's more, these organs can have a double attitude in a period of weak proletarian activity. This is the case with the police who also protect the individualised citizen against the violence of other parts of the population while repressing this same citizen if he or she is a striker or protester.

<sup>12</sup> The notion of alienation (from the Latin *alienus*, which means "other", "stranger") refers to the dispossessed individual, rendered a stranger to him/herself.

<sup>13</sup> The marches appeared from 1968 and the most significant example of them was that of FIAT Mirafiori in Turin starting from May 1969.

every wage labourer to make them go to work early in the morning. And often, those who are subjected to violence retransmit it to others, thus perpetuating the violence of class society, among other reasons because the workers fit in with and accept the violent functioning of capital as the only perspective ...but that is another discussion.

From the point of view of workers' struggles or simply of everyday reactions, violence is not an end but a means. And like all means, it can only be appreciated as a function of the aim, whether it is historic (revolution) or contingent (a simple conflict), appreciated from the start by the actors themselves and by all those who aim at the transformation of society.

Violence must therefore be considered as a tool linked to a goal, a tool which can be spontaneous or reflective, individual or collective, majority or minority initiated. The limit of its use, in the framework of its efficacy in relation to its objectives, is to not deny to the adversary (whether individual or collective) their humanity, to not humiliate them<sup>14</sup>, even if the perception of humiliation by the humiliated is specific to each person.

All the methods, all the means used by the enemy (torture, imprisonment etc.) are not neutral and cannot therefore be used by the proletariat in their entirety, or by possible specialised corps, without losing their way and failing to achieve the end.

In fact, in the use of violence, what counts is whether or not it contributes to reinforcing the individual and collective consciousness of those who use it, if it favours or not self-organisation. This includes the perception of the objectives of the struggle, of its temporary state, of the balance of forces.

## **WHAT IS THE POSITION OF WORKERS' AUTONOMY IN RELATION TO THE USE OF VIOLENCE?**

Let's recall first of all what workers autonomy is. It defines at the same time, for the working class in struggle, its objectives, the means for achieving them, its modes of organisation and its capacity to think about its struggles, before, during and after they happen.

Workers autonomy translates itself therefore into a political centralisation built up starting from the shop floor, founded on the refusal of the principle of delegation and the active participation of the greatest number.

In this process by which the proletariat distinguishes its political position, organisation does not confine itself to the factories but takes over the whole of society, from the housing question to those of transport, education and distribution of supplies.

When fully displayed it fights piece by piece the invasion by Capital of all spheres of human activity and anticipates what a communist society could be like.

Practically organised around factory and neighbourhood committees centralising themselves from the bottom up, workers autonomy has used violence in the factory and in neighbourhoods, in demonstrations or occupations, in a minority fashion (specialising, or not, participants in certain tasks) or openly, but always sticking to the objectives already mentioned and being the product of the struggle and not something grafted on from the outside wanting to "wake up" the sleeping masses by example.

There is no point in making an opposition between (good) mass violence and (bad) minority violence. Once again, it is the question of the means and the consequences which must be examined each time. Finally, if the committees have to create, at one moment, specialised organs for the use of violence against their enemies, these organs must be systematically controlled. Specialisation should be avoided by the rotation of tasks, but above all by keeping the designated participants involved in all their other activities (factory, neighbourhood etc.). This activity should be considered as contingent on the activity of the workers themselves, that is to say that if the committees fall apart, victims of the inversion of the cycle of struggles and/or repression, then the organs must disappear.

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<sup>14</sup> A humiliation is a reduction of someone's esteem, leading to mortification, a state of impotence or submission.

## LONMIN: A QUESTION DE SURVIVAL

### *The facts*

The violence which punctuated the strikes in the mines of South Africa last July began with virulent confrontations between miners during the strike which paralysed the second biggest platinum mining company, Impala Platinum (Implats), at the beginning of the year. To go on strike the miners had had to confront the delegates and activists of the NUM union. Two delegates had been killed and several injured. The union was opposed to the strike which called into question the wage negotiations, the basis of the compromise between the official unions and the company. A dissident union, the AMCU<sup>15</sup>, formed by former NUM activists expelled ten years before, stepped into the breach and used the victorious end of the conflict to strengthen itself. We must not forget that the main demand of the wave of strikes which followed, after wage increases, was to get rid of the NUM. The miners refused to be represented by its leaders and activists who they accused of selling out to the mining companies.

On 10 August 2012, the AMCU was also going to lead the strike of face workers in the platinum mine of Marikana, in the heart of the Rustenburg region. Here the strike was violent from the start. In a few days there were around ten deaths, including two mine guards, two police and six employees amongst whom there were at least three activists or delegates of the NUM, who had opposed the strike once too often. There were numerous injuries, including of trade unionists from the NUM and Solidarity<sup>16</sup>. The two dead cops were attacked with machetes when they were patrolling in a car.

The strikers were thus treated as criminals to be got rid of by the NUM, the company managers and the leaders of the state. In an email to the managers of Lonmin, Cyril Ramaphosa<sup>17</sup>, former NUM leader turned politician and businessman (he is on the board of Lonmin), denounced the actions of the strikers as being criminal activity rather than a trade dispute. He incited the state to act accordingly. He boasted about having made the demand to ministers that he knew.

Two days later, on 21 August, the police opened fire on workers occupying a hill close to the mine, claiming it was in self-defence. It was in fact a deliberate act of vengeance, dictated and covered up by the leaders of the state. A certain number of the dead were shot in the back or were crushed by armoured cars while the others were shot in face. Nothing forced the police, who were sufficiently numerous and heavily equipped with tear gas and water cannons, to carry out a murderous intervention. The president of the country, Jacob Zuma, also the leader of the ANC, supported the police's action, along with the Police Minister, the Minister of Mines and the leaders of COSATU and the NUM. Acts of violence continued to punctuate the conflict which extended into the platinum and gold mines, and to a lesser extent into the coal, diamond and iron ore mines.

If it is clear that there was a certain degree of coordination between the workers in various mining sites to help extend the struggle, there was scarcely any organisation to confront the police and security guards. The only victims on the side of the forces of order had been in the course of skirmishes involving a few participants. Cars fell into the hands of groups of strikers by chance or some guards were attacked at night. At Sishen<sup>18</sup>, the country's big iron ore mine, around 300 strikers (out of 4,400 permanent staff and 3,800 temps) got hold of a large quantity of mining vehicles. When the police and the guards came in force to take back the equipment the strikers made no attempt to use these giant vehicles. Weighing several hundred tons they would have been much more powerful than tanks, never mind the small armoured cars used by the police.

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<sup>15</sup> AMCU (Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union) founded in 1998, recognised in 2001, with 50,000 members. By comparison, the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) claims 300,000 members and is therefore the biggest affiliate of COSATU (Confederation Of South African Trade Unions, founded in 1985), with 1,800,000 members all together.

<sup>16</sup> Solidarity is a small union (founded in 1902) with around 130,000 members, mostly white and of the Christian faith.

<sup>17</sup> Born in 1952, in Soweto, he was never a miner by profession but always a white collar employee, and was hired by the NTCU union in 1981. He was one of the founders of the NUM in 1982.

<sup>18</sup> In the town of Dingleton, in the North Cape Province, 400 km west of Rustenburg.

Violence, and more still the threat of violence, were used by the strikers against those who wanted to go to work. With the exception of one scab, the victim of a “necklace” (a burning tyre round the neck), cruel excesses seem to have been limited. However, the cousin of an NUM official was killed by mistake. But threats were much more important than actual acts.

To prevent the return to work strikers attacked the minibus taxis, suspected of transporting non-strikers. Some were burned, or more often stoned, in any case forcing them to stop their journeys. This also prevented the journeys of women and schoolchildren who had to use this method of transport. These actions were criticised by the organisers of the strike, stressing that was not a good policy to get on the wrong side of the inhabitants of the mining regions.

Through the voice of its secretary-general, Zwelinzima Vavi, COSATU launched a challenge to the strikers, saying it wanted to take back the region of Rustenburg. A rally with the leaders of COSATU and the NUM was going to be organised in the stadium at Rustenburg on 27 October. Strikers, mostly coming from Angloplats, were out in force, more than 1,500 of them wearing black tee-shirts saying “We remember the Rustenburg massacre!” and “Forwards to a minimum wage of 12,500 rand!”. They described themselves as “non-union”. This was bad luck for the first trade unionists to be recognised in their red tee-shirts. These red symbols were burnt by the strikers. Lesiba Seshoka, the spokesman of the NUM, had to be put under police protection.

After several weeks of forbidding all demonstrations the cops had chosen their camp and went to act as the security service for the trade unionists. It’s under their protection that trade unionists went to beat up a representative of the Marikana solidarity campaign. The cops finally took the activist away before firing rubber bullets and stun grenades at the strikers who’d counter-attacked. Having taken control of the stadium, the police then went to chase after the strikers, without however firing any bullets. At the end of the rally, a speaker asked the 400 participants who were still there to leave in a group as a security measure.

### ***Relations with the unions***

Straightaway, and in parallel with union demands, the striking South African miners expressed their opposition (even their hatred) towards the NUM. They have shown practically (and explained in many times in various interviews) the necessity of confronting it, considering it as a state-run union (close enough in its relations with the state to be like an official union in the old Eastern Block), as a manager of the workforce, as an enemy. This hatred was realised practically in numerous acts of violence, against NUM activists and officials, going as far as killing them.

As in India (see below), it is “natural” that workers will be drawn to or will set up base unions, as an alternative to the official unions. This is what happened with the foundation of the AMCU in 1998. And yet, 14 years later, the Lonmin strikers seem to have arrived at the conclusion that the “rank and file” union, the AMCU, is not the solution. Without opposing themselves to it<sup>19</sup>, they have organised themselves, including during the attempt to unite with the other strikers of Rustenberg and elsewhere.

As things stand, we don’t know what the concrete organisation of the strike was like. We didn’t find any visible trace of an autonomous workers’ organisation. Nevertheless, if it turns out to be true that the workers have not only been capable of bypassing the base union (something which is already very positive) but of creating their own organs of struggle, then that would be something extremely positive for workers the world over.

### ***Violence and its usage***

South Africa is a country which was and still is bathed in violence. The legacy of Apartheid and above all the extreme destitution of whole sections of the proletariat have not been erased (officially, the rate of unemployment is around 26%; the distribution of income makes SA the tenth most unequal country in the world; violent crime is an everyday reality<sup>20</sup>). Thus generalised social

<sup>19</sup> That said, we don’t know the number of AMCU activists in Lonmin.

<sup>20</sup> Whatever we might think of the statistics, they are frighteningly eloquent: 50 murders per day and a rate of murder (reduced somewhat since 2003) of 34 per 100,000 per year. This should be compared with a rate of 4 for the USA and rates of 1 to 2 for European countries. Horrifyingly, the number of rapes regularly increases and is

violence will inevitably be expressed in workplace conflicts. This is particularly true with truck drivers who, because of the daily robberies and hijackings which they are victims of, are authorised to carry guns during their work. When they strike there is a natural temptation to use their arms against the police and scabs.

To return to the case of Lonmin, if violence was used knowingly against the scabs or NUM officials in a selective fashion, it was always in small groups. During the events, if there was an evident will to oppose the police, there was no visible system for facing them together, no organisation such that if the strikers had really wanted to fight with the police they could have taken account of the forces deployed. And this absence of any military organisation was paid for very dearly during the dispersal which left groups of workers isolated to be attacked when the police decided to take revenge and to make an example of them. At least, compared to the example of Maruti (see below), there were no uncontrolled outbursts on the part of the strikers, and violence was managed even if it was weakly organised and the strike and its organisation survived.

## THE BLOODY SUMMER OF SUZUKI MARUTI

### *The events of 18 July hour by hour*

7:00AM

During the morning shift an incident flares up round 7:00AM between a worker, Jiya Lal, and his supervisor on the assembly line. Insults are exchanged; the worker is called “Dalit”<sup>21</sup>.

The supervisor goes complaining to the management and the worker (a permanent staff member) is suspended.

After the news of suspension is known colleagues go on strike and inform the other workers of the A plant that something has happened, using their mobile phones.

10:30AM

14 members of the rank and file union go to the management offices for a first meeting.

11:30AM

Pause for the meal. In the canteen workers discuss. After the meal nearly all workshops are on strike and workers are discussing the situation.

1:00 PM

A new meeting takes place in a meeting room in the management offices located on the first floor. 3 representatives of Haryana Labour Department attend too.

In the meantime production is now stopped in the A plant.

Colleagues of the suspended worker wait at the foot of the stairs near management offices.

Management proposed that the suspension is only for today and that the worker will be reintegrated tomorrow. This is orally transmitted by union members to waiting workers who transmit it by mobile phone to workers in other workshops.

Workers refuse that proposal because in last May when a similar problem happened for a union member, suspension was immediately lifted. *“If it worked for a union member, why not for a simple worker?”*

3:00 PM

Supervisors of the first shift leave the plant. Workers of first shift decide to stay to wait for workers of the second shift.

As workers of the first shift are staying, work of second shift doesn't really start. And this lasts into the afternoon.

5:00 PM

Workers through union members send a 30 minute ultimatum to management: the suspension must be removed now!

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presently 2.1 % of women per year: one woman in three has been raped and a quarter of men admit to having committed rape. This makes SA the country with the highest known rates of rape, figures which are all the more horrible because they mostly reflect assaults on children and adolescents.

<sup>21</sup> *Dalit* means to be an untouchable, to be outside the system of castes and therefore on the lowest social level.



5:30 PM

Management sticks to its position: suspended worker will be reintegrated tomorrow and everything will be erased.

Representatives of Haryana Labour Department leave the factory.

7:00 PM [Is it precisely at that time?]

Vast majority of workers of both shifts let their accumulated frustration; rage and hatred of the plant explode.

Every symbol of the company is attacked. Supervisors, management of whatever position (easily recognizable by the colour of their jacket and cap) are beaten even if they are known for not being hostile towards workers in the past days. In some places workers gave workers' jackets to supervisors so they wouldn't be attacked. Cars are smashed; attempts are made to set fire to machines. Workers spread out across the whole plant.

Workers go up in the management offices, expel any people found there, beat them, throw computers and furniture on the floor. This is when the top manager of human resources, Ashwim Kumar Dev, is so heavily beaten that his legs are broken. Then a fire is started in the offices and it quickly spreads. That's why the top manager met his death.

7:30 PM

Every worker runs out of the factory. Guard huts at plant gates are burnt down.

Police force (roughly 60 people present since October 2011) and guards (70 people) don't do anything against the excited and furious workers (round 1,200 people) except standing aside and informing the Police and Firewatchers department.

Workers spread out in Manesar. Nobody remained within A plant.

Many, obviously casual workers, have already decided to run away. Some undressed in the streets in order not to be recognized. Others go back to the villages to take their personal belongings and leave the area.

8:00 PM

Police has already put in place its "dragnet": Gurgaon railway and bus stations are surrounded, along with any place where it's possible to take a taxi, in order to arrest anybody that "smelled of" Maruti. A second batch of police went to the villages in Manesar to arrest Maruti workers whose addresses they had since the summer 2011 arrests [Q: mostly permanent workers?]. In some cases inhabitants helped workers, in others they denounced them to the police.

In the meantime, fire-fighters extinguished fires in the A plant.

## ***A first balance***

### Injuries

100 management members (of any position) sent to hospital for serious or minor injuries.

1 top manager killed.

No workers sent to hospital.

### Prison

Workers on the run: 66

Workers, still today in Gurgaon Bhondsi prison of which trial has started on May 1<sup>st</sup>: 147

### Mass redundancy

Suspended permanent workers: 546

Sacked casual workers: 2,100

### Production

The Manesar plant (A and B) closed up (Locked out) till 27 August.

In the meantime, supervisors refuse to go back to work.

Before 18 July daily car production was 1,500/1,700 units. Between 27 August and 4 October it was 150/200. From 4 October onwards it is 800/1,000.

### Protection

Adding to the permanent police force (100), 600 guards from private companies along with CISF (Central Industry Security Forces, a specific group of Indian police) and supplier companies have been hired and are permanently patrolling all the plants.

Bodyguards are also hired to accompany top and middle rank managers going about the plant.

Staff

Of the permanent workers from before 18 July, only 95 remain in A plant and 500 in B plant.

Some have since been re-hired but only after a serious examination.

Casual workers have been totally removed from the A plant.

*After the events the Maruti management issued a statement saying “we will no longer employ temporary staff”.*

Struggles against custody

A committee with some intellectuals on it is active so that workers will not be forgotten (No date for court trial)

In some Haryana villages there are protests against police repression.

“Defence lines”

Contrary to what Leftists, official union representatives, and MSEU (*Maruti Suzuki Employees Union*, base union) leader Sarabjeet Singh said to the newspapers in the aftermath of 18 July, the turmoil didn't start because bouncers were called neither by management nor by any provocations of any kind. Here we have soberly recorded the facts according to information from comrades in Delhi.

***A chain of events that was a long time coming***

The events of 18 July didn't fall out of the sky. They were certainly the product of the whole preceding period and the actions of the three parties involved, the workers (particularly the casual workers), the management and the base union. In looking at the course of events we can see three important periods (starting with the most recent and working backwards):

- 1) From April to July, the mounting pressure of the workers and the “bitter-endism” of the base union, for which the change in tone and practice starting in April was a matter of survival. So, on 12 May, during an incident between a worker and a foreman, the leader of the MSEU slapped the foreman to show clearly that the union was not on the side of the management. Except that playing the “tough guy” without having the means to put it into practice was an error that was paid for dearly. In addition, the temp workers, the casuals (80% of the workforce in the factory) who had participated in the strike and who were still part of the workforce, clearly understood the situation: they had paid dearly for their participation in the strike, they had believed that the situation was going to change, they had believed in their victory and in the base union. Yet since then the situation had not changed and perhaps even got worse. Rage mounted and there was no perspective.
- 2) From November to April, as the patient work of GWN<sup>22</sup> explains, the management gained the upper hand and tension mounted between the base union and the management. Each wanted to retake the initiative and advantage since the agreements of October 2011. These agreements, like any compromise, were only the expression of the balance of forces at the time. When the agreement was signed each of the parties tried to modify the compromise in their favour. In this game, the boss took the advantage straightaway, by the forced/negotiated departure of part of the leaders of the union and non-respect of the agreements in whole or part. Above all they regained the upper hand in the factory by moving workers from one workshop to another, from plant A to plant B and by intensifying the pace of production. The consequence was the reestablishment of the bosses' command. Faced with this, the base union was undermined and it progressively ceased to be the expression of the workers, being reduced simply to its members, above all those with permanent jobs.
- 3) From June to October, the various events of the strike. In fact, to understand what happened it is not enough just to criticise one of the actors, the base union and its practice since the agreements of October 2011, but to understand the limits of the strike itself, which began in June 2011, limits which have not been surpassed since then.

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<sup>22</sup> See Gurgaon Workers News no. 51, September 2012.

As we've already said<sup>23</sup>: “Let's remember once more a major fact, objectively characterising the situation of the working class in India in large modern industry<sup>24</sup>: 80% of workers are non-permanent (apprentices, trainees, temps), which reflects, but not all the time, the level of skill and qualification. Until the need to abolish this separation is put forward in struggle as the absolute condition of future success, the door remains wide open to the bosses' policies of division. And there's the rub. The natural tendency of a union is the stabilisation of the balance of forces with the boss and this is easier to obtain with the permanent workforce than with the casual one.”

So let's look at the four errors of the base union.

- First point: the base union held to the illusion that the permanent workers could act on their own.
- Second point: the base union acted as a minority whose vocation was leadership without having intermediaries and, even more, without being a permanent product of the activity of the workers.
- Third point: the base union *de facto* acted like it was alone in the world, not only in the factories of the region but also in relation to the factories of the Suzuki group like PowerTrain which adjoined plants A and B. This localism would carry a heavy cost.
- Fourth point: the base union showed an ignorance of the balance of forces and above all of the abilities of capitalist command in the factory, from the bosses down to the foremen, including the divisions within this command.

### ***The source of the problem***

But it is in the strike itself that we have to look for the reasons for the inability of the workers themselves, starting in October, to find solutions.

Let's specify from the start that the strike broke out in June 2011 in a new factory with a working class which was young and without previous experience of struggle in a factory. Then there was the constitution of a group of permanent workers (around 15 of them), coming out of the technical institutes, present in a few workshops, intending to turn themselves into a “pre-union”, to rally other workers in various sections of the factory, to organise links, to prepare the strike and set up a strike fund for buying food.

This pre-existing organisation, necessary for the first conflict, also expressed a double limit:

- It transformed itself *de facto* into the leadership of the strike (in some sense it was a self-proclaimed strike committee but one never contested by the workers), while its decisions were simply rubber-stamped by the strikers' assembly,
- It concentrated the demands (wage increases, more holidays, improvement in transport to work, the hiring of part of the casuals on a permanent basis, etc.) on the recognition of the base union. The union became the emblem of the strike for the strikers who never called this basic idea into question.

Despite these two initial limits, there at the beginning, the strike was a real strike which found the resources to carry on, to consolidate itself, to stop and start again up until the compromise agreement. Nevertheless, it never went beyond these initial limits, whether amongst the strikers of the factory or outside in the other factories, for the whole four months of the conflict. In effect, the strikes which broke out at Suzuki Powertrain, Suzuki Motorcycles and Suzuki castings on 7 and 10 October 2011 remained simply juxtaposed to each other, or, more exactly, without a unified direction, because there were connections between members of the base unions in each factory, and also between the temp workers who lived in the same neighbourhoods. As for the workers of the assembly plant and those of Powertrain (the two factories are next to each other), they shared a canteen with the strikers.

As often happens, it was the enemy, the state (that of Haryana as well as the federal state) and the other bosses who put pressure on those of Maruti Suzuki to find a way out of the conflict before it went any further.

<sup>23</sup> See MC-KpK Pamphlet no. 5, “Workers autonomy strikes in India”, May 2012.

<sup>24</sup> We mustn't ignore the fact that the majority of the millions of workers are in the grey economy.

The end of the strike for the workers was made more difficult by the departure of 30 members of the base union. But nothing was resolved. As we said, the dilemma to be solved was the following:

*“The strike started out with one objective, summing up all the other demands, the recognition of the base union, and it remained focused on this. This is the paradox of the strike. All the subterranean power of the workers only surfaced around an objective which is completely transitory in relation to the duration of the class struggle. This is an objective which, if it synthesised at one point the hatred against the despotism of the factory and the aspiration for respect and dignity, risks becoming a new “prison” for the workers if it is not gone beyond.”*

That dilemma has not been resolved. This explains the choices of the base union activists and the powerlessness and then despair of the other workers, and therefore the background and the substance of the events of 18 July.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses***

The example of Maruti thus shows that the workers’ violence which emerged was not a durable expression of the collective strength of the workers, a moment required to shift the balance of forces in their favour, but on the contrary was an expression of a limit which was not understood and overcome and was transformed into an ambivalent act which expressed strength and weakness at the same time.

While in the factory, and on strike, they coordinated their action by workshop, and between workshops, with the help of mobile phones. They destroyed (or tried to destroy) all the symbols of capitalist command. In the factory their violence knew no obstacles – the police and the guards disappeared.

But once they left, the community of struggle revealed itself as having been only temporary, as circumstantial, and then it was every man for himself. There was no organisation to prevent workers being arrested by the police at the strategic points of Gurgaon, without even mentioning those arrested in their own homes. The hated factory was the place of strength for the workers, once they’d gone out of the gates they had nothing left.

It needs to be known that in the region of Delhi and its suburbs (Gurgaon, Faridabad, Nodia and Ghaziabad), in the small and medium-sized firms, a very aggressive boss class bears down on the workers. General conditions are pushed to unbearable heights. For example, in one factory, Michael Aram Export, the 400 workers are not recorded as staff, they are paid in cash (when they *are* paid) and paid overtime does not exist. In another one the boss has already moved the factory four times (from the Okhla neighbourhood in the south east of Delhi to Nodia) losing part of the workers along the way. In such places, the notion of social shock-absorbers certainly doesn’t exist, the capitalist relation is naked, and this explains the irruptions of workers’ violence which may be manifested as the killing of a boss or the partial or total destruction of a workplace<sup>25</sup>.

This is precisely the paradox. Maruti Suzuki is a modern factory which doesn’t move just like that, and even if the Japanese bosses are supported largely by the Indian methods of labour relations where social shock absorbers don’t really exist, they are not of the same calibre as the thousands of shock bosses of the small and medium companies. We can therefore expect that the workers of Maruti Suzuki would have been a little less “reactive”, impulsive, that the organisation which they had developed before, during and after the strike (even with all the limits that we know about) would have protected them from this type of reaction. We shouldn’t forget that behind the term “worker” are hidden numerous divisions between workers, of which two at least are very important: the division between permanent and casual and that between rural and urbanised. The first is objective: 80% of workers are employed on a casual basis and at least 40% return to their villages in the surrounding states. In addition, during and after the strike 50% of the casuals were replaced.

However, it is not a question of opposing these categories to each other – the good organised, the bad unorganised, the good casuals, etc. – as the only possible and plausible explanation. Simply put, even if it doesn’t explain everything, the lack of experience (of a lasting organisation) of these workers coupled for some of them, still living in the countryside, with a legitimate refusal to blend

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<sup>25</sup> For example, at the Oerlikon Graziano Company in Nodia, which makes transmission units for cars, where the boss, L.K.Choundary, was killed by the workers on 23 September 2008 during a strike.

into the urban way of life (we are in India, where that way of life is not so “urban”) leads to a sort of visceral opposition to the factory: *“The boss won’t give up anything; his strength is his factory; let’s destroy his factory”*.

A further clarification is needed. In the big factories of the Delhi region recent years have seen the emergence of base unions through hard-fought struggles mostly carried out by permanent workers. Rapidly, they have been seen to be integrated and failed to overcome the permanent/casual division. The contrary fact that the permanent workers of Maruti are not integrated in factory support relation, whatever the limits may be, may also have a positive impact for the workers of small and medium subcontracting companies: even in a factory considered as a little paradise, the violence of capitalist relations is still there and so is the reaction of the workers.

We are not factoryists, admirers of the factory as a place of production (even if we study the organisation of production to understand its strengths and weaknesses which can, or not, favour workers’ struggles). We are “operaists” in the sense that we conceive of the factory as a site of struggle and organisation where the class is constituted. Therefore we have nothing against the fact that workers leave a factory or destroy it. We deplore the fact that no organised collectivity was created capable of prolonging its existence outside the factory. Some other time perhaps...

## FOXCONN IN AUTUMN

### *Modern conditions of exploitation*

The facts as they are known are quite simple. The Foxconn factory is in Taiyuan (in the province of Shanxi, in the centre-east of the country) and employs 79,000 workers who produce mostly the Apple iPhone 5. They also make components for HP, Dell, Samsung and Microsoft. Wages are low (around \$US 250 per month for the basic hours). The pace of work is hard - eight hours a day for six days a week repeating the same movements, without moving from the work station, as *“Lean Manufacturing”* requires. Then there is the overtime, indispensable for building up a little stash of money which allows most of the workers to leave and look for a less painful job or to send some money back to their families in the countryside.

But the worst thing is the barracks-like conditions in the workshops and in the internal dormitories in the industrial complex of this Taiwanese electronic subcontracting group. The workers are overwhelmingly young, single and uprooted from their villages. As in the other assembly factories of Foxconn, more than half the operators on the assembly lines are women. On the other hand, the low-level management, in direct contact with and close to the line workers, is mostly male, following the example of the thousands of private security guards who watch over the productive and reproductive (canteens, common rooms and dormitories) compounds of Foxconn. As a worker who’s since left the factory testifies:

*“It’s just one big sweat-shop where the worker is considered as an interchangeable element who has no right to speak. The official unions which are supposed to defend our interests are bogus... The guards and the foremen shower us with insults all day long and individual rights are scorned everywhere”*.<sup>26</sup>

Yet the workers are not completely docile. In March and April 2012, they had already spoken about these things during strikes and demonstrations for higher pay. These were agitations which had never rallied the majority of workers in the factory but which had seriously perturbed the productive cycle, particularly because they happened so suddenly. Suddenly but not disorganised, because like everywhere else and even more at Foxconn, discipline is absolute and the internal controls over the productive territory are of a rare efficacy with the use of traditional means of spying (informers and private guards) and “technological” ones (cameras everywhere and the necessity of using an electronic ID card for every movement between sections). There is no reason for us to think that behind these struggles there is one or more formalised autonomous class organisations. However, the Foxconn regime cannot be assaulted by the practical critique of the class struggle without a certain level of collective consciousness and organisation. A new demonstration of this was made by the riot inside the factory compound of Taiyuan, on 24 September 2012.

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<sup>26</sup> *Libération*, 30 September 2012.

## **23 and 24 September**

The origin of the confrontations which set 2 to 3,000 workers against the security guards of Foxconn at the start and then against 5,000 cops later on, was an “altercation” in a dormitory between some of the workers and security guards who intervened late at night on Sunday. The fighting was sufficiently intense for Foxconn to decide to suspend all activity in the factory for 24 hours. The police made a few arrests, of which a good number were from among the 40 rioters who had been taken to hospital. The official explanation from Foxconn said that the violence followed an attempt by guards to separate two groups of workers who were brawling in a dormitory.

It’s an explanation which doesn’t explain why, immediately, thousands of workers took on the Foxconn militia... *“The real reason is that they [the rioters] were frustrated with their lives”*, said the first person to distribute images of the riot on the internet. Frustrated with the life that they led and were demanding a better future. We can take from this the profound sense of the workers’ violence which expressed itself in September 2012 in this Foxconn factory. It was a perception shared by the thousands of workers who knew how to transform themselves in a collective reaction to the bosses’ command of a particular productive territory.

## **Counter-power?**

This was an eminently political act, however ephemeral, an act which speaks of the liberation from wage labour and of workers’ power. An act which is certainly isolated but which contains in embryo the entire destructive power specific to the exploited class. But it was also an act which did not manifest the capacity to master the productive territory of capital by grafting on the first stable elements of a workers’ counter-power. A workers’ counter-power which is progressively set up in the day to day fight against capital and all its manifestations by the exercise of a systematic and organised proletarian force, but which doesn’t simply consist of that.

A counter-power which defines itself practically by the affirmation, via free association, of a closer and closer cooperation between proletarians to fight against social relations founded on exploitation and oppression. Cooperative direct action which destructures, which dismantles piece by piece the means of capitalist and state domination, is the necessary path towards fully developed social productive cooperation, towards the end of societies divided into classes. Yet it is precisely the engagement of this type of dynamic which was lacking at Taiyuan. Thus, in its immediacy, the riot of September 2012 understood itself more as the prolongation of the initiative of workers’ defence against managerial despotism than as a conquest of power by the workers. But for all that, following the example of all other independent defensive struggle, “peaceful” or not, it resonated as war cry against exploitation and oppression.

## **THERE’S VIOLENCE AND THERE’S VIOLENCE....**

*“With regard to individual or collective acts of violence, such as blowing up a bridge built by strike breakers or destroying a machine in a factory, you can have a situation where any subversive content escapes all comprehension. In this case the action can be condemned not only by the capitalists but also by the working class.”<sup>27</sup>*

The three cases that we have analysed don’t have much value as examples. They are not recipes to follow or even to oppose to each other. It’s not a matter of scorning these workers’ efforts, whatever critiques we might make or whatever limits we might find in them. On the other hand, the study of these three cases has a great utility for helping us understand that the road to class autonomy is tortuous, made up of trial and error, advances and setbacks by which worker organisation forms itself, the only means by which violence can be handled in a useful way.

Amongst the platinum miners of South Africa those who carried out the violence seem to have been small in number relative to the numbers on strike. Nevertheless, the first offensive actions – including the killing of guards, cops and union officials – while very minoritarian, certainly shifted the balance of fear. Whatever the perceptions of the other workers were (who never rejected these acts),

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<sup>27</sup> Joyce Kornbluh, “Wobblies & hoboes: IWW, agitateurs itinérants aux USA, 1905-1919”. Montreuil, L’Insomniaque, 2012.

the use of selective violence very probably helped to create a strike where the active minority (the underground miners) succeeded in assuring the support or at least the benevolent neutrality of the surface workers.

As much as we can regret the absence of organisation deployed to collectively resist the inevitable vengeance of the state, this absence has not prevented the extension of the struggle, first of all to the other platinum and gold mines where the conditions of work are comparable and which are geographically close, then to the other metal mines and the coal mines, with more modern and mechanised conditions of work.

On the contrary, the use of violence by the forces of repression encouraged this extension. Rather than the body count and the injuries being to the net advantage of the state and its union, the political cost to them has been very high. The public indignation against the methods of repression reminiscent of the apartheid era gave a justification to the workers' violence, before and after. Even in a position of strength, violence is a tool to be used with caution, a lesson which applies to the bourgeoisie today as much as to the proletariat if the situation is ever reversed.

For the Maruti workers, the mass violence which they displayed against the management and its representatives and the means of production was not offensive, but rather the expression of frustration with the limits reached and never overcome during the struggle in the factory. The incapacity of the union to go beyond its quality as a representative towards being an organisation directly involving the workers as actors, and in all categories (casual or not, urbanised or not), was finally exposed. With the riot the feeble beginning of workers' organisation rapidly succumbed to combined bosses' and police repression.

Finally, in the case of Foxconn, if it remains difficult to discern the level of organisation of the workers, it is certainly a matter of an episode – neither the first nor the last – in a series which does not permit the workers the luxury of avoiding episodes of violence in the face of Chinese totalitarianism.

In each of these three cases, beyond their particular characteristics, episodes of violence are positioned at different moments of the movement provoked by the dialectic of class struggle, and can serve to accelerate this movement, or even to reveal the balance of forces, not immediately visible. In one case the violence allowed the subterranean struggle to reach a stage where it emerges into the light of day, marking the beginning of a local cycle. In another it accelerated the defeat, in a situation coming out of a struggle whose high point had passed, marking the end of a local cycle. Finally, in the third case, it was a question of one episode amongst others, which marked neither victory nor defeat for one camp or the other, but revealed the contradictions between the two camps, and their respective determination.

These examples allow us to verify that the use of violence (by proletarians as well as by their enemies) does not have a mechanical and easily foreseen effect on the struggle, and the extent of its effects is not necessarily linked to the intensity of the violence employed.

The principal thesis that we propose in this discussion is that the exercise of force only has a strategic value when it proves indispensable as an affirmation of workers' counter-power. Vengeance and self-defence, although inevitable and indispensable in many circumstances, have nothing in common with this approach. Without opposing them to the violence which dissolves social relations founded on class domination, these expressions of the proletariat don't contain any transformative dynamic. "*Force is an economic power*"<sup>28</sup>.

For the revolutionary proletariat this translates itself into the practical capacity of restraining capitalist social relations, by the concrete critique of the present situation which transforms itself into workers' power. It is clear that only particular circumstances allow the exercise of proletarian force to also be an exercise of power. The presupposition is that society should be "in labour". Labour in the sense of that leading to birth in the metaphor of Marx: "*Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one*"<sup>29</sup>. The signs announcing the possible end of the old society are not of an "economic" nature (the final crisis dear to the Third International<sup>30</sup>).

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<sup>28</sup> Marx, Capital vol 1, Chapter XXXI.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> For a critique of erroneous points of view on the crisis, see MC Letter no. 35, "State fiscal crises and the Greek example", December 2011.

On the contrary they are internal to the social relations, they are eminently political. Force is *“the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one, that it is the instrument with the aid of which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised political forms”*<sup>31</sup>. According to Engels, force is likely to give birth to a new society above all when the proletarian movement manifests enough power to be able to demolish the bourgeois construction of the state piece by piece. But not only that.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels specify that *“If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class”*<sup>32</sup>

The destruction of the state must be coupled with the demolition of the capitalist regime of production and more generally the social conditions of a society divided into classes. Violence then qualifies as an “economic” force, as a “subjective” conscious action, of the proletariat becoming thus a new social relation, no longer founded on classes and their antagonisms. Outside this framework workers’ violence is a secondary and ephemeral manifestation despite the intensity with which it can be expressed. Leaving the plane of workers’ power, vengeance and self-defence exposes itself to all kinds of possible deviations (not necessarily however), from nihilistic terrorism to blind cruelty via a conflictual subordination to the existing order.

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<sup>31</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, chapter IV.

<sup>32</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, Chapter II: Proletarians and communists