

2022 ELECTIONS IN FRANCE:

A VICTORY FOR PLEBISCITARY DEMOCRACY

The double-headed election (Presidential and Legislative) of the year 2022 marks a stage in the involution of democracy from its classic representative and liberal form towards its plebiscitary form¹. The three main political coalitions, led by Macron, Mélenchon and Le Pen, have similar and compatible objectives to various degrees. This victory for plebiscitary democracy is certainly facilitated by the Constitution of the Fifth Republic and the weakening of intermediate bodies, and, in the case of the historical political parties (the Republicans, the Socialists and the French Communist Party), their almost complete disappearance from the national scene.

It is also the demonstration through the ballot box of the consequences of the growing concentration of political power by the executive. The gap between the voter turnout in the first rounds of each of the elections (72% in the Presidential as opposed to 42.7% in the Legislatives) cannot be explained just by the demobilisation of the opposition electorates after the defeat of their champion in the Presidential elections: the alliance supporting the Presidential programme in the Legislative elections lost, in proportion, more or less as many votes as the others.

This consensus, around the “presidentialisation” of political power, is in some ways a political victory for the *Gilets jaunes* – the isolated citizen seeks a means of addressing themselves to the chief directly², treating the intermediate bodies and other instances of democracy with disdain. This presidentialisation of power is logically accompanied by a personalisation of politics with the consequence of giving the vote a plebiscitary orientation. You express yourself as being for or against President Macron.

Thus, the participation gap is explained. If, in the Presidential election, the voter chooses a supreme leader, in the Legislative elections the reactions are twofold. The first, the majority one, is, consistently, abstention, since the real power is in the hands of the President of the Republic; the second, for the minority of participants, is to vote against Emmanuel Macron to prevent him carrying out his programme. After the second round of the Presidential election, 61% of voters hoped for a majority opposed to Macron in the National Assembly. Between the two rounds of the Legislative elections, while the alliance supporting Macron appeared weakened, only 19% of voters wanted an absolute majority for him³. Once the results were known, 71% were satisfied with the absence of an absolute majority.

This plebiscitary turn is not new, in France and in the world, but it is accentuated by a favourable context: a crisis of civil society in the countries of the first capitalist circle, the restarting of activity coming out of the pandemic and the march towards world war.

¹ See our work document no.10 *The Crisis of political liberalism*: https://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/WorkDocuments/DT10_Crise%20Dem_EN_%20Complete%20vF.pdf

² See Bulletin no. 16, *Gilets jaunes: the first attempts at mobilising “the people” for a strong state against the proletariat*: <https://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/BLT1812ENvF.pdf>

³ See <https://elabe.fr/relection-emmanuel-macron/> et <https://elabe.fr/2nd-tour-legislatives-2022/> (French only)

ILLIBERAL PLEBISCITARY DEMOCRACY IN RESPONSE TO THE FAILURE OF LIBERAL REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

In the division of the electoral landscape into three parts resulting from the Presidential election, Emmanuel Macron occupies a singular place – at one time portrayed as the champion of the “camp of reason” by his lieutenants, flanked on his left by the social-chauvinism of Mélenchon and on his right by the xenophobic nationalism of Le Pen, he embodies a form of plebiscitary democracy of the centre, functional to capital – which distinguishes him from his sovereigntist competitors. After his election in 2017, as centre left – made possible by the splits in the Socialist Party in power, the weakness of the outgoing president and the scandals afflicting the candidate of the reactionary Catholic Right – Macron siphoned off voters and party apparatus from The Republicans, consolidating his positions at the centre of the political game. But the decline of the two principal so-called parties of government did not open the way to the emergence of new political parties in the straightforward sense of the term – that is to say capable of uniting social groups around an ideal of society, to elaborate a programme to realise it, making use of trained and loyal activists, rooted in civil society.

In the presidential election, following in the footsteps of the PS and the PCF, LR joined the ranks of second-rate candidates. The inability of its candidate, who came fifth, to reach the 5% mark, does not bode well for the party descended from the founder of the Fifth Republic. Although it has kept sixty or so deputies in the National Assembly, it no longer has, for the moment, a credible path towards government power.

The crisis that LR and PS, two parties that were once in the majority, are experiencing is explained by their inability to adapt to the expectations of voters. In the past, these political parties were able to gather activists around a political vision in line with the interests of capital, beyond the particular elements of any programme. These activist bodies permeated civil society and were bearers of political debate. Voters made their choice for or against an overall political vision.

We wrote⁴:

“Civil society itself is no longer capable, in the epoch of fully developed capitalism, of generating within itself dynamic equilibriums endowed with sufficient stability. The world market, capital which valorises itself, has undermined and loosened its contours. The growing complexity of social relations, the extreme dispersal of productive and reproductive territories, the frantic shearing of the elements of identification structuring civil society, the return of mass migrations of the workforce, shattering families as the elementary cell of conservation of what exists ending up in a social order which is extremely volatile. At the same time, this growing complexity of social relations associated with the role of dissolving the sovereignty of nation states played by the triumphant world market depreciates politics as the art of mediation between civil society and the committee for the affairs of the bourgeoisie.”

If the dying off of the intermediary bodies is behind the Macronist adventure, the past five-year term has further weakened them, and the new one is not likely to improve their lot. The unions in particular have been kept out of the major decisions (labour regulations, unemployment insurance reform, aborted pension reform), including the CFDT, with which agreements could have been reached. After having gone it alone, with an absolute majority in the National Assembly, the executive felt its isolation during the reactionary revolt of the *Gilets jaunes*⁵. Macron, directly targeted by the protesters, had managed to get back in the saddle during the “great national debate” by playing on the direct relationship between the people and the head of state, dear to Gaullism and

⁴ See work document no.10, *op.cit.*

⁵ See Bulletin no. 16, *op.cit.*

enshrined in the plebiscitary Constitution of the Fifth Republic. To this he added a municipal democracy adorned with the virtues of closeness to the population and pragmatism.

The increasing fragmentation of civil society has also broken its organic link with the political parties inherited from the era of liberal democracy. Today's voter no longer presents him- or herself as a citizen adhering to a political project or an ideology, but as an individual consumer who chooses and defends particular causes. Thus, society is no longer polarised socially, politically or ideologically, but by micro-particularisms.

The obsolescence of the parties, i.e. centralised bodies with a vocation to govern according to elaborated programmes, is seen today in the emptiness of the programmes presented by the three dominant political forces. These programmes are nothing more than collections of points, not necessarily linked to each other, intended to appeal to the widest possible range of voters who, like good consumers, only take what they like, without worrying about the rest, in these low-cost supermarkets of received ideas.

Conversely, the *Common Programme of Government*, elaborated by the PS and the PCF in 1972 and updated in September 1977, was strongly structured around four linked axes and had 42 chapters. We note the degradation of the party function. Certainly, the *Common Programme* was only a programme for capital intended to reabsorb some of the effects of May '68, but, at 192 pages long and with a print run of a million, it was the product of a veritable organic work. This was above all a time when the proletariat, through its struggles, agitated the whole of civil society and posed to it the fundamental political question of class domination, with an urgency and an insistence far superior to anything today.

The main formations today (Renaissance, RN, LFI), whatever their declared ideology, share a conception of anti-party organisation: the leadership, often co-opted, decides everything while the grassroots cells have no control over it and are generally only active during electoral campaigns. The emphasis on the figure of a charismatic leader and the adaptation, in the digital age, of short slogans and heterogeneous, even contradictory, proposals make it possible to chase isolated voters. Isolated voters do not care about contradictions, as long as their favourite programme elements are carried by a "superstar" leader they like.

In retrospect, we can say that the RN had the characteristics to undergo this mutation from the outset. The *Front National* of Le Pen père had no common ideological base for all its components. It was an alliance of religious fanatics, xenophobes, various racists, the heirs of the losers of the Second World War and the Algerian War. It was never a matter of unifying the far right, but of forming an electoral alliance welded together by the figure of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

The successive alliances carrying the candidacies of Mélenchon and his henchmen have no more coherence. The "Mélenchon party" was built by agglomerations, successive political Mergers and Acquisitions, after the exit from the PS, which was opportune, to say the least, given the immoderate thirst for solitary protagonism of its leader⁶. The common objectives of the heterogeneous parts of these electoral alliances were, in the first place, the occupation of an empty electoral space to the left of social democracy⁷ and then, once the bankruptcy of the latter had come about, its replacement.

⁶ The small Left Party, Mélenchon's vehicle within the Left Front coalition (2008-2016), encapsulated in the 'horizontal and gaseous' La France insoumise movement for the 2017 elections, itself enveloped five years later in an ad hoc presidential coalition, the People's Union, renamed the Nouvelle Union populaire écologique et sociale after its enlargement to the other left-wing formations for the legislative elections.

⁷ On the model of Die Linke in Germany and Rifondazione comunista in Italy.

La République en marche, renamed *Renaissance* and forming with its allies the *Ensemble* coalition⁸ for the 2022 election season, is not a classic party either. It is again an electoral alliance sealed around the candidacy of a leader. The urgency of its on-the-spot formation even left room for whimsical personalities like Martine Wonner or Joachim Son-Forget. The Macronist party is specialised in communication, with an accepted advertising strategy.

Another thing these three political conglomerates have in common is the weakness of their anchorage, so far, in local communities. Meanwhile, a residual but still important territorial anchoring is one of the causes of the relative success of LR and PS in the legislative elections.

Beyond the official “narratives” that present Emmanuel Macron as a champion of liberalism standing up to the demagogic danger represented by the so-called extremes, we can also see his programme as an expression of the plebiscitary tendency.

After his re-election, Macron advanced the idea of a new CNR⁹, “*National Council of Refoundation*”, intended to compensate for the suffocation of parliamentary democracy, breaking with “*reforms from above*” and “*to bring together all the actors*”: the political, economic, social forces and associations, elected representatives from the regions, and citizens chosen by lot, all that on the grounds that “*we must unite the Nation*”. Drawing on the experiences of the *Séjour de la Santé*¹⁰, the Citizens’ Climate Convention¹¹ and the “great national debate” organised by the town halls, following the *Gilets jaunes* movement, this Council must, under the responsibility of the Prime Minister and the government, organise “discussions in the field” in the 1,200 “life fields”, “in which all stakeholders will be involved”, similar to the “Big Marseille” pilot plan. For example, for health, “*doctors, paramedics, elected officials and patient associations*” will be invited to participate. For the Élysée, this participatory method would have the advantage of creating consent and sharing responsibilities and constraints by “anchoring” all the stakeholders.

On the institutional level, Macron wants to set up a trans-partisan commission to study various proposals: a return to a presidential seven-year term, mid-term legislative elections, a legislative ballot with a dose of proportional representation... In the end, strengthening the presidential function and destabilising Parliament.

We can search in vain for differences with Mélenchon’s programme, the so-called parliament¹² of the New Popular Ecological and Social Union (Nupes) and other conventions or citizens’ assemblies, also partly filled by drawing lots. Without forgetting the promise that from the works of

⁸ Which brings together the Mouvement démocrate, Horizons, Agir, Territoires de progrès, the Parti radical, En commun and the Fédération progressiste.

⁹ Cheaply, it lurks behind the same logo as the National Council of the Resistance from WWII.

¹⁰ The *Séjour de la Santé* was the name given to a series of negotiations over the state of the healthcare system held in 2020. The name comes from the street where one of the entrances to the Ministry of Health is located. It began on 25 May and lasted seven weeks during which the consultation was coordinated by the ex-General Secretary of the CFDT, Nicole Notat. The negotiations ended up with an agreement on 13 July, signed by all three of the big union confederations involved (CFDT, FO and UNSA). It concerned wages, hiring and working conditions. The total financial package announced was €8.2 billion, including 7.6 billion for non-medical staff. Other proposals were later put forward since by the government, and 33 measures were announced on 21 July 2020. See our text “Health as an Industry Generating New Value”, October 2020: https://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Booklets/BR6_Sant%C3%A9%20_EN_vF%20Site.pdf

¹¹ Composed of 150 citizens chosen by lot, charged with formulating ecological proposals but not holding legislative or statutory power.

¹² On its official website, the Nupes parliament is presented as follows: “*It brings together the different political forces of this union and many figures from the world of trade unions, associations, science and culture. It will gradually have 500 members. [...] This new parliament will initially contribute to the campaign for the legislative elections: it will highlight the support and ideas of our majority, feed the programme, help the candidates for the legislative elections, and make the link with the social and ecological struggles.*” See: <https://parlement.nupes-2022.fr/>

a constituent assembly (of Trotsky-Lambertist memory) would be born a Fifth Republic authentically parliamentary, founded on “*the generalisation of proportional representation*” but “*stable*” and “*effective*”.

Nupes and RN are taking up the citizens’ initiative referendum (RIC), a key demand of the Gilets jaunes. Le Pen also promises a much greater use of the “presidential” referendum (provided for in Article 11 of the Constitution), in particular to pass her anti-immigrant “national priority” measures, so as to force the hand of Parliament, the Constitutional Council or the European courts of justice. As for Macron, faced with the possibility of a legislative blockage, he has also said he is ready to use a referendum to bypass Parliament.

Thus, the three main political formations propagate the illusion that grafting instances of plebiscitary democracy onto the republican political apparatus will reinforce an idealised democracy, in the most abstract sense. But such instances would only project the image of it, empty of any substance. Bourgeois democracy, when it is in good health, is the political mediation of the interests embodied by the intermediate bodies produced by civil society. The completed proletarian democracy, for its part, is a democracy of action, in which the assemblies, centred on the productive territories, take the means of deliberation and of immediate transformation that is to say without mediation, of society.

The instances of plebiscitary democracy are the result of the isolation and alienation of the citizen as well as of the involution of civil society into a people. It is no longer a question of making a body with a political project, but of voting, in an isolated way, possibly via the internet, on the occasion of a constantly renewed plebiscite or in temporary assemblies appointed from above, for immediate and limited measures, which are then transferred to a legislative assembly itself devitalised, which can in turn reject them or adopt them and transfer them to the executive power, which decides in the end on their application. Rather than re-establishing the link between society and its so-called representatives, it is a matter of formalising the separation, filling the space thus created with formal mechanisms that will in turn contribute to deepening this separation.

The purpose of these arrangements is to set up a gateway between the executive and civil society. It is a question of constituting, by fiat, substitutes for the intermediate bodies. But, despite the fact that some people call on the State to save civil society, such State excrescences cannot make up for the absence of organized activity. The capacity of such mechanisms to permeate civil society and become the voice of the aspirations that run through it seems very limited, at a time when electoral results show a profound lack of interest in political commitment.

THE STATE IS NO LONGER IN A POSITION TO SATISFY RENEWED DEMANDS FOR PROTECTION

In contrast to the downsizing and cost-cutting measures taken by his predecessors during the fiscal crisis of the 2010s, candidate Macron has announced new unproductive public spending to consolidate the state’s control over civil society. A planning law for the Ministry of the Interior allocates an additional 15 billion euros over five years, meaning an increased presence of law enforcement in the streets, the recruitment of 8,500 judicial personnel by 2027, the creation of Republican Action Forces (police officers, magistrates, educators) in “difficult neighbourhoods” as well as the creation of a national border force, the effective deportation of rejected asylum seekers, the introduction of new requirements for the issuance of residency permits, the generalisation of fixed fines, and the rollout of universal national service... Repression and ideological control seem destined for a bright future.

In line with the Green Pact for Europe and the European recovery plan, Macron's industrial policy aims to achieve the "energy and technological autonomy" necessary for the affirmation of a European "strategic autonomy". It is a question of providing France and the Franco-German bloc with an independent and competitive industrial base in the sectors of arms, energy, transport, space, agriculture, medicine, and the creative and digital industries. As for energy, Macron announced the relaunch of the French nuclear industry and the development of a French offshore wind and solar industry, as well as investment in green hydrogen, while the renationalisation of EDF¹³ is on the horizon.

All these investments must be combined, in Macron's plan, with an increase in the total quantity of labour. The re-elected president dreams of "full employment" at the end of his second five-year term. To achieve this, he intends, after having abolished benefits for people who give up their jobs with his reform of unemployment insurance, to introduce unemployment benefits which will be modified according to the economic situation. He intends to centralise all employment services in a single body per territory, *France Travail*. He also plans to systematically get employees interested in their company's performance by means of tax-free bonuses. Macron has also campaigned on the gradual raising of the legal retirement age to 64 or 65, with the abolition of the last special regimes (EDF, RATP, but with the exception of those of the police and the army) and convergence towards a universal pension scheme. However, the hypothesis of an extension of the contribution period without postponing the legal age, which is more acceptable to the CFDT, would also be under consideration. Macron also promised the introduction of a universal time-accrued account for pensions allowing for individual career adjustments. Finally, he wants to make the RSA¹⁴ conditional on a part-time "integration activity". All these measures tend towards the forced employment of casual workers, the least well-integrated proletarians in the labour market, and older workers, all of whom are forced to accept unpleasant jobs. Older workers who are pushed out before they can claim the full pension rate will see the amount of their retirement pension fall, and will have to supplement it with miserable jobs.

On the side of Macron's opponents, much higher levels of public spending are proposed. Beyond the details of the debate between Mélenchon and his loyal opponents, described as "social liberals"¹⁵, we can observe that both agree on this point: the economic programme of the Nupes is nationalist and anti-European, firstly because it gives national primacy to France, by making its debt weigh on the other countries of the Union, and secondly because it anticipates, in the short or medium term, the explosion of the Union. As for the RN, it is no longer a question of just leaving the European Union, Brexit having demonstrated the very real consequences, and having somewhat chilled the voters. It is a question of getting as much money out of it as possible until it explodes from the inside.

We care little about what would happen to the EU or the French state in such a situation. It is very likely that the consequence would be a major fiscal crisis in the European area, of a qualitatively higher intensity than the Greek debt crisis, and thus leading by contagion to a global financial crisis resulting in a crisis of valorisation.

Two possibilities: either the economic part of the Nupes programme is a bluff. The electoral alliance is unable to finance a programme that was a massive scam, as others have been known to be.

¹³ Électricité de France, an electric utility company with generating capacity across Europe, as well as the US, Argentine, Brazil, China... Already largely owned by the French state (83.76%).

¹⁴ *Revenu de solidarité active*, a form of in-work benefit introduced in June 2009.

¹⁵ See: https://tnova.fr/site/assets/files/32593/terra-nova_la-grande-conversation-2022_reponses-aux-commentaires-de-jl-melenchon-sur-lanalyse-du-programme-economique-de-la-.pdf

Or the economic part is serious and promises a major economic crisis and the suffering it would cause, first and foremost to the poorest and the working class, all to satisfy the bruised egos of a bunch of nationalist and reactionary politicians who fantasise about an isolated and independent France, which they could get their hands on without having to agree with the bourgeoisies of neighbouring countries.

Under the current constraints (fiscal crisis of states, exit from the Covid crisis, march to war) of the capitalist mode of production, notwithstanding democratic formalism (liberal or plebiscitary), the state is no longer able to respond to the voters' demands for protection. Macron's programme can't achieve anything. It sacrifices the living and working conditions of proletarians, despite a major spending plan. His opponents, who claim to be able to do better, only offer programmes that are impossible to finance without robbing the other countries of the European bloc and thus, in the end, the proletarians living there.

SHAMEFUL SYMPATHIES FOR RUSSIA

Macron presented voters with a plan for the development of the productive forces of capital and for European integration, following on from his first term in office, but taking place in an international environment agitated by the war in Ukraine and the accelerated formation of rival geostrategic blocs. It's pre-war capitalist plan summarised by the formula: "*A more independent France in a stronger Europe*"¹⁶.

To carry it out, Macron promised to continue the reinforcement of the French armed forces enshrined in the 2019-2025 military programme law (LPM), as well as a "*civil mobilisation plan*". The army budget, which rose to 32 billion euros in 2017, and 41 billion this year, has to reach 50 billion in 2025, and will allow the modernisation of their land, air, sea, space and cyber capacities¹⁷. This military effort has to be accompanied by a preparation of the "rear", with the doubling of the operational reserve, by 2027, and the repatriation of industrial sectors and the increase of strategic stocks. As he made known at Eurosatory, where he extolled his ambition for an enlarged and integrated European arms industry¹⁸, Macron instructed the military staff to re-evaluate the LPM in the light of the war in Ukraine and in the perspective, in his words, of a "war economy". The fact remains that the international situation currently runs against the French president's plans. The revival of the Atlantic Alliance mainly benefits the American defence industry, as is evidenced by the German government's desire to acquire F-35 and Chinook combat aircraft and helicopters¹⁹, while European armaments projects (Scaf, MGCS, Eurodrone) are stalling and the European Defence Fund's annual budget does not exceed one billion euros.

Despite these investments and differences in detail, on the subject of the war in Ukraine, the positions of Macron, Mélenchon and Le Pen remain compatible. There is nothing to add regarding the latter two's well-known financial links with the Russian state²⁰. All three agree on the need for a negotiated de-escalation with Russia, which they favour over the hypothesis of military and

¹⁶ Speech on 18 March 2022: <https://www.ledevoir.com/monde/europe/687834/presidentielle-francaise-macron-promet-une-france-plus-independante-sur-plusieurs-fronts>

¹⁷ Amongst others: renovation of the seaborne and airborne components of nuclear deterrence, advancing the project of next generation airports, delivery of Barracuda nuclear attack submarines, of multi-mission frigates, of the Rafale F4-1 jet, of land vehicles of the Scorpion programme, recruitment of 6,000 personnel.

¹⁸ Speech on 13 June 2022. See: <https://www.usinenouvelle.com/article/a-eurosatory-emmanuel-macron-plaide-pour-une-preference-europeenne-en-matiere-d-achats-d-armement.N2015032>

¹⁹ <https://www.opex360.com/2022/06/25/lallemagne-et-les-pays-bas-vont-renforcer-leur-cooperation-militaire-grace-au-f-35-et-au-ch-47-chinook/>

²⁰ We'll leave to the reader the question of the nature of the links between *La France insoumise* and the narco-state of Venezuela, along with the hypocrisy of those who talk about wanting to fight the financial corruption of politics.

economic attrition favoured by the US and British governments. A peace that the three leading French political formations are ready to pay for by endorsing Russia's annexation of pieces of Ukrainian territory. In the long run, all three want to conclude a good neighbour agreement with Russia by clearly defining the borders of "each to their own". In this scenario, Russia gets back what it can before the costs of war become too high and Europe gets an accelerated integration of the Ukrainian regions left under Kiev's control. With no regard for a so-called "right to self-determination" for the people of Ukraine in particular, or "international law" in general. In the war between nations, as in the class struggle might make right.

A FRAGMENTED ASSEMBLY

Macron and Mélenchon defeated by the permeability of the RN

The legislative elections brought their share of surprises. For the first time in the Fifth Republic, a newly elected president did not obtain an absolute majority in the National Assembly. This is a defeat for the presidential coalition. The strategy of not campaigning adopted by the executive is proving to be a failure, even if its candidates maintain a base of votes. Macron's "above the fray" game has hit a brick wall.

It is also a defeat for the Nupes. Not only were the unrealistic objectives put forward by Mélenchon not achieved, but the candidates running under the banner of the Nupes attracted 4 million fewer votes than in the first round of the presidential election. *France insoumise* obtained fewer deputies (79) than the RN and did not establish itself as the main opposition party. Those who denounced the lack of representativeness of the former majority, find themselves with deputies elected by less than 30% of the registered voters²¹.

The winner of these elections is none other than the RN, in terms of seats, as it too lost votes. It increased its presence in the Assembly more than tenfold, from 8 to 89 deputies. For the first time, the RN won outside its traditional areas of influence (North, East and the Mediterranean region) – while consolidating its position there – to expand in the South-West, in the Centre and in Burgundy. The constituencies it won are essentially suburban and rural, those where people struggle to pay the heating bills, and where the *Gilets jaunes* were relatively strong. The RN was able to channel the reasons for the *Gilets jaunes* electorally.

Another cause of this victory was the rupture of the "cordon sanitaire" around the RN. The process of normalisation of the xenophobic party, started with the distancing from Le Pen père in 2011, and accelerated thanks to the presidential candidature of Éric Zemmour, finally bore fruit. According to a study published in *Le Grand Continent*²²:

"If the three electorates had rigorously applied the blocking strategy, the RN would have only got 24 deputies. About a third of the major parliamentary progress of the RN can thus be put down to the increase in its popularity from the first round, and the other two thirds to the transfers that took place between the two rounds, amounting to 26% from abstentionists, 26% from the right, 26% from the left, and 16% from Macronists. The responsibility for this growth – via the victories in the second round – is therefore well and truly shared between all the electorates."

The RN also won thanks to a discourse constructed to be permeable to all the other political formations. Opportunism continues to pay at the ballot boxes.

²¹ Clémentine Autain, for example, was elected by 22.90% of registered voters in the 11th constituency of Seine-Saint-Denis.

²² See: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2022/06/29/comment-le-cordon-sanitaire-a-saute-analyse-de-la-percee-lextreme-droite-a-lassemblee-nationale/> (our translation)

But the big “winner” remained abstention. More than half of registered voters did not turn out to vote. The segments of the population that abstained the most were the under 35s, at 63%, workers and employees at 60% and, finally, the unemployed at 69%.

No government alliance

The idea of forming a “government of national unity” found no supporters apart from the national secretary of the PCF, but there seemed to remain a possibility of an alliance between *Ensemble* and *Les Républicains* in the Assembly. After all, the electorates and programmes of the two groups are close. Such an alliance would allow the executive to obtain an absolute majority, with measured adjustments to Macron’s presidential programme.

Despite the efforts of Sarkozy’s supporters within LR, such a government alliance is not possible for the moment. LR is torn between the centre right and the far right. Its voters are those who most easily switched to RN candidates in the second round of the legislative elections (39% of LR voters in the first round of the legislative elections described themselves as having switched to RN in the second round²³).

For the former Gaullist party in disarray, an alliance with Macron would risk losing an important segment of voters to the RN for good. This would be the last nail in the coffin. For LR, it seems more interesting to keep its distance, waiting for better days. After all, the alliance that supports Macron, as well as his party, *Renaissance*, are still a relative novelty. Their future after Macron’s second five-year term is far from assured, while the RN is here to stay, a continual threat. LR prefers to consolidate its position and, counting on a failure of *Ensemble* to implement its programme, hopes to get back its voters lost to the now weakened centre, before attacking the ascendant RN.

In spite of this, it is likely that LR deputies will occasionally vote with the presidential majority. It is possible that the delayed explosion of the Nupes will allow the presidential camp to adjust itself, just as the RN’s control over its first-time deputies should not be overestimated. Apart from a possible fragmentation of the two opposition blocs, there remains the possibility that the RN and the Nupes could support certain laws with some modifications.

Macron suffered a defeat in the legislative elections. His camp took a heavy blow. But the country has not suddenly become ungovernable, the National Assembly is still not the key institution of capital’s politics in France, whatever the headlines and tearful editorials might say.

PLEBISCITARY DEGENERATION IS A PRELUDE TO WAR

The crisis of representative and liberal democracy is worsening. The plebiscitary mutation is progressing and giving momentum to the sovereigntists, despite the efforts of the Macron camp to channel it towards a programme compatible with the necessities of capital valorisation. At the front of the stage, Macron’s plan seems to have come to a standstill, while the negotiations continue behind the scenes. Despite the usual parliamentary vicissitudes, the executive has already managed to pass a few laws.

The working class remains absent from the ballot box as well as from large-scale struggles. However, the measures to, firstly, mitigate the pandemic and, secondly, to encourage the resumption of capital accumulation, continue to produce deleterious effects on the living and working conditions of proletarians. To take the most visible example, the crisis announced for the health services this summer is unprecedented. Despite several struggles in hospitals, which remained too isolated, the

²³ Against 17% of voters for the Left and 24% Macronist. Study by the review *Le Grand Continent*, see above.

only possibility seized *en masse* by workers in this sector is to withdraw, temporarily (sick leave), or definitively (resignation, with or without retraining). This phenomenon of individual refusal of work is notable in the countries of the first circle of capital, and manifests itself to varying degrees in all fields of economic activity. Nevertheless, it is still only an individual withdrawal, especially if it is the most stabilised elements of the class that exercise this refusal. Those they leave behind, at the mercy of the capital valorisation process, are partly those for whom withdrawal is not acceptable, but above all those for whom the consequences would be much harsher, financially (low wages, debts) or for other reasons (precariousness, work visa, irregular situation etc.).

Faced with these individual behaviours of more or less clearly expressed desertion by wage-labourers, Macron's plan sounds like a general "mobilisation", attacking head-on those in receipt of unemployment insurance or social benefits. It is a question of reinstating capitalist and state command over those proletarians who can be reintegrated into the production process, in order to prepare the country for a shock which could, in a second stage, go as far as a global armed conflict.

The minority within civil society whose link with the state has not yet been broken continues to demand increasing protection, in total confusion, against real and imaginary threats: against impoverishment, against foreigners, against globalisation, against Europe, against climate change, against war, against falling purchasing power... If it is better adapted to the capitalism of these times, Macron's "at the same time" is not capable of offering an adequate response to all these demands, any more than the nationalist maximalism of Mélenchon or the reactionary xenophobia of Le Pen. The fiscal crisis of states, aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the march towards world war strongly limit the margins of manoeuvre of governments. The world economy is heading for a recession by taking a classic inflation/superheating path. The divergent interests of the geopolitical blocs, whose separation is deepened by the escalation of war in Ukraine, not only prevent concerted and effective action on the ecological front, but also intensify production for the purposes of world war.

The programmes of the three plebiscitary forces may be written as shopping lists that can satisfy all the respective electorates, but the supermarket is not stocked enough, the shopping cart is too small and, above all, the purse is empty.

In France, a military escalation is not on the agenda, at least in the short term. The consensus among the majority political forces seems to be based on a classic Gaullist position, while preparing for a global conflagration. Nevertheless, if we refer to the formal evolution of the political forces that are in the majority in France today and the hypothesis of a deepening of multiple crises (fiscal, environmental, political, geopolitical), the adoption of a warlike posture accompanied by an attempt to consolidate the people behind a charismatic leader, inspired by Zelensky's Ukraine, can hardly be excluded. Macron does not hide his admiration for the Ukrainian "popular resistance" even as he speaks of restoring the "nation-army pact" and "mobilising" the unemployed towards jobs. The step from there to the militarisation of work is shorter than it appears.

Political abstention, at the ballot boxes as in the productive territories, is not enough. Proletarians must go beyond individual rebellions and unite to fight on the economic and political terrains. In the absence of autonomous struggles, plebiscitary regression and its authoritarian and warmongering consequences are the logical products, we can even say *natural* products, of the capitalist mode of production and its catastrophic dynamic.

APPENDIX:

WHY REJECT THE VOTE? CONSIDERATIONS ON THE LENIN-BORDIGA DEBATE²⁴

Lenin, and before him the great majority of the workers' movement inspired by Marxism, was always in favour of participation in bourgeois democratic elections. Nevertheless, unlike the social-democrats, Lenin confined the field of electoral action for communists to the pure propaganda of revolutionary ideas.

“The party of the revolutionary proletariat must take part in bourgeois parliaments in order to enlighten the masses; this can be done during elections and in the struggle between parties in parliament. But limiting the class struggle to the parliamentary struggle, or regarding the latter as the highest and decisive form, to which all the other forms of struggle are subordinate, is actually desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.” – Lenin, “The Constituent Assembly Elections and The Dictatorship of the Proletariat”, 16 December 1919.²⁵

Responding to Amadeo Bordiga, then at the head of the abstentionist fraction of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) which went to present its abstentionist theses to the Second Congress of the Communist International, held in Petrograd in July-August 1920, Lenin set out the weakness of the positions of the Italian Marxist. The latter was opposed in effect to all participation in bourgeois elections while being for intervention in the unions because he considered them to be workers' organisations.

“You have said that the trades unions too are opportunist, that they too represent a danger. On the other hand, however, you have said that one should make an exception for the trades unions because they represent a workers' organisation. But that is only true to a certain degree. In the trades unions too, there are very backward elements. A part of the proletarian petty bourgeoisie, the backward workers and small peasants, all these elements really think that their interests are represented in parliament, and one must combat that through work in parliament and teach the masses the truth through facts.” – Lenin, “Second Congress of the Communist International, Debate on parliamentarism”, 2 August 1920²⁶

Like Lenin with Parliament, Bordiga wanted to use the tribune of the unions to denounce the corrupt leadership and propagate communist positions within these organisations. The Italian revolutionary showed another sign of weakness in his abstentionism by envisaging, even if not overtly, participation in elections in countries “*where the bourgeois revolution is still going on*”.

“In those countries where a bourgeois revolution has as yet only started and is creating new institutions, the entry of communists into the representative bodies, which are still in the formative stage, can have a big influence on the development of events in order to bring about a favourable outcome of the revolution and the final victory of the proletariat.” – Amadeo Bordiga, *Second Congress of the CI, Theses on Parliamentarism, 1920*²⁷

In both cases, with Lenin or with Bordiga, the principal argument for or against participation in Parliaments and in unions is the necessity of unmasking these institutions in the eyes of the most backward elements of the labouring masses who have illusions that Parliament and the unions can take up their aspirations and demands.

²⁴ Note: this text has been distributed, in June 2017, but never published since. It is invariant.

²⁵ Part VI, point 3: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/dec/16.htm>

²⁶ 3rd paragraph: <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch08a.htm>

²⁷ Point 6: <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch08.htm>

“We had to call the elections and show the masses, by example and by facts, that this Constituent Assembly, which was elected at a time of the greatest general need, did not express the aspirations and demands of the exploited classes.” – Lenin, *Second Congress of the Communist International, Debate on parliamentarism, 2 August 1920*²⁸

Bordiga rejected this argument, stating that *“in the countries where the democratic order was introduced a long time ago, there is no possibility of exploiting parliamentarism for the revolutionary cause of communism. Clarity of propaganda no less than preparation of the final struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat demands that communists carry out propaganda for a boycott of the elections on the part of the workers.”* – Amadeo Bordiga, *Second Congress of the Communist International, Theses on parliamentarism, 1920*²⁹

For the Italian communist, the rejection of participation in elections in countries with a long history of bourgeois democracy stems from three considerations: firstly, the proletariat had already had the experience of parliamentary struggle; secondly, the workers’ parties which had hitched themselves to it had all sunk into opportunism and treason to the workers’ cause; finally, the period was, according to him, that of ideological and material preparation for the revolution. In conformity with the analysis of the Communist International, Bordiga anchored the adoption of the direct tactic of revolutionary (and abstentionist) preparation to the judgement that proletarian revolution was the order of the day in several European capitalist countries.

“Participation in elections and in parliamentary activity at a time when the thought of the conquest of power by the proletariat was still far distant and when there was not yet any question of direct preparations for the revolution and of the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat could offer great possibilities for propaganda, agitation and criticism.” – Amadeo Bordiga, *Second Congress of the CI. Theses on Parliamentarism, 1920*³⁰

Conversely, according to him, when the proletarian political cycle is descending, participation in bourgeois elections cannot be ruled out, even in countries with established bourgeois democracy. Therefore, the positions of Lenin and Bordiga are not diametrically opposed. On the contrary, they have one essential point in common: Parliament can be a place of struggle for the proletarian party, a place of propaganda for the communist revolution, in the same way as the trade unions.

This mistake has two main consequences. The first is the flagrant underestimation of the force of attraction that social democracy exerts on the institutions of the workers’ movement. This force of attraction is only very slightly the consequence of betrayals. It results from the real subsumption of social labour to capital induced by the development and generalisation of mechanisation. The relative surplus-value that results from this allows, under certain conditions and for long periods, to increase the real wage and the nominal wage without the historical process of devalorisation of labour power coming to a halt or, worse for capital, being reversed. The second corresponds to the very idea of the hegemonic revolutionary process within the former communist fraction of the workers’ movement.

On a very high level, this idea makes the insurrectional episode the culmination of this process. This phase – certainly crucial – was conceived as being in radical discontinuity with the preceding period, that of revolutionary preparation, that of constitution of the class into a party. Hence the division of communist politics into two distinct moments: that of the application of so-called direct tactics by Bordiga, marked by the political and practical preparation for the seizure of power and the destruction of the bourgeois state, and that of so-called indirect tactics, when the

²⁸ 6th paragraph: <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch08a.htm>

²⁹ Point 7: <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch08.htm>

³⁰ Point 6: <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch08.htm>

communists set out to conquer the leadership of the proletariat. In the Rome Theses of the Communist Party of Italy (30 January 1922), Bordiga and Umberto Terracini set out two phases³¹:

*“More specifically, the term ‘direct tactics’ refers to actions of the party when the situation prompts it to take the independent initiative of attacking bourgeois power to topple or seriously weaken it. To undertake such an action, the party must have at its disposal an internal organisation solid enough to warrant the absolute certainty that orders from the centre will be executed with the utmost discipline. It must also be able to count upon the discipline of the trade-union forces it controls, in order to be sure that a large part of the masses will follow it. Furthermore, the party needs military formations of a certain efficiency and, to enable it to maintain control over the direction of the movement in the likely event of its being outlawed by emergency measures, it requires an underground apparatus and especially a network of communications and liaison that the bourgeois government is not able to control.”*³² [...] *It will not always be possible to proclaim openly that the general movement unleashed by the party has as its aim the overthrow of bourgeois power. Except in the case of an exceptionally rapid development of the revolutionary situation, the party could engage in action on the basis of watchwords that are not those of the revolutionary seizure of power but can in part be realised only by means of this supreme victory, even though the masses consider them to be nothing but needs that are immediate and vital, and in part limited, since they can be realised by a government that is not yet that of the proletarian dictatorship. This party tactic would give it the possibility of stopping the action at a certain point where the organisation and combativeness of the masses would remain intact, if it appears impossible to continue the struggle to the end without compromising the possibility of taking it up again effectively when new situations present themselves.*³³ [...]

The conditions do not always exist for a tactical action that can be called “direct”, since it has the character of an assault on bourgeois power by the Communist Party and the forces at its disposal. Far from limiting itself to pure proselytising and propaganda, the Party can and must exert its influence on events by taking charge of its relations with other parties and social and political movements and by exerting pressure on them in such a way as to determine a development of the situation favourable to its own goals and to hasten the moment when decisive revolutionary action will be possible. The initiatives and attitudes to be adopted in such cases are a delicate problem. To find a resolution, the first condition is that they should not be and should not seem to be in contradiction with the other needs of the Party’s own struggle, according to the programme that only the Party defends and for which the proletariat will have to fight at the decisive moment. [...]³⁴

The left parties and in particular the social democrats often put forward demands of a nature such that it is useful to call the proletariat to direct action to obtain them. In effect, if the struggle were engaged, the insufficiency of the means proposed by the social democrats to realise their programme of workers’ measures would be immediately apparent. [...]³⁵

At this moment, the Communist Party will be able to agitate for these same demands, making them more precise, making them a flag of struggle of the whole proletariat that it will carry forward to force the parties that speak of them out of simple opportunism to work for their realisation. The Communist Party will propose them as an objective of a coalition of trade union organisations, as economic or even political demands. But it will avoid the constitution of committees directing struggle and agitation in which it will be represented and engaged alongside other parties, in order to keep the attention of the masses on the specific programme of communism and to preserve its own freedom of movement for the moment when it will have to widen the platform of action, outflanking the other parties, abandoned by the masses after the demonstration of their impotence. The trade union united front, thus understood,

³¹ https://www.marxists.org/francais/bordiga/works/1922/01/bordiga_19220130.htm (the Rome Theses are not all available in English)

³² Part 7, point 41, taken from: *The Science and Passion of Communism - Selected Writings of Amadeo Bordiga (1912–1965)*, Ed. Pietro Basso, Brill, 2020.

³³ Part 7, point 42: *The Science and Passion of Communism*, Ibid.

³⁴ Part 6, point 30 – our translation from the French.

³⁵ Part 6, point 36 – our translation

offers the possibility of joint actions of the whole working class."³⁶ - Amadeo Bordiga, Umberto Terracini, *Theses on the tactics of the Communist Party of Italy (Rome Theses)*, 30 January 1922

As with Lenin, the preoccupation of Bordiga was to anchor tactics in the great strategic design, rejecting the typical social-democratic dichotomy between the minimum programme and the communist programme, between here-and-now reformism and propaganda for socialism. However, the communist movement of their time did not conceive of the possibility of revolutionary experimentation by the proletariat before its constitution as an independent political party. Basically, the indirect tactic of winning the hearts and minds of the workers to revolutionary ideas was applied to a class whose dominant collective political expression was trade-unionism, class unionism, one of the consequences of which was revolutionary parliamentarism, the use of the bourgeois parliament as a forum for the workers' cause and a sounding board for socialist ideas. The party or its embryo had then to remain in contact with this dominant political expression within the proletariat by attracting to its positions more and more fringes of workers previously convinced of the validity of the class reformism embodied by social democracy. The tactic resulting from this vision was intervention in the unions and, notably for Lenin, participation in bourgeois elections before entering into the pre-revolutionary period.

Our sketch of the revolutionary process is different. The essential point of divergence is that, for *our* current, workers' autonomy can develop before the pre-revolutionary phase by episodes which will certainly remain minoritarian and discontinuous. The tempo of the formation of class consciousness is not therefore rigorously separated into two moments, the first of workers' reformism, the second of workers' revolution. Moreover, these two expressions of class consciousness always cohabit in a more or less conflictual way and with the clear pre-eminence of the second one in the higher phases of the proletarian political cycle. The workers' party or its embryos are therefore always on the side of workers' autonomy, even when this still struggles to emerge. They are its best interpreters, its most determined militants. Their task in the lower phases of the proletarian political cycle is to at best favour polarisation between workers' autonomy and state reformism, which results from the historical degeneration of workers' political reformism and its integration into the state through the extension of social democracy.

The extension of social democracy is made possible by the real subsumption of social labour to capital, the rise of relative surplus value thanks to mechanisation. This rise allows for long periods of time, and under certain conditions, an increase in the real wage, eventually the nominal wage, while avoiding stopping – in fact, accelerating – the historical movement of the devalorisation of labour power. To take the side of the thrusts of workers' autonomy against state reformism means to reject the indirect tactic which wants to wrest away from reformism institutions which are now caught up in social democracy, like the unions. It is also necessary to contest the idea of reducing the direct tactic to the preparation for insurrection, a reduction which still has free rein, and a certain success, in radical libertarian scenes. This is necessary because the key to the revolutionary process is not the exercise of class violence but the capacity for workers' autonomy to express a dual power, to impose its own order against the dominant order, where workers' autonomy grows: in the productive and reproductive territories of capital.

To return again to the problematics of revolutionary parliamentarism, we do not share the common presuppositions (which nevertheless lead to divergent tactics) of Bordiga and Lenin. "*Parliamentarism is the form of political representation peculiar to the capitalist order*", declares the first

³⁶ Part 6, point 36 – our translation

abstentionist thesis³⁷. It incarnates the highest form of the state, the democratic republic. The latter “*in our modern social conditions becomes more and more an unavoidable necessity and is the form of state in which alone the last decisive battle between proletariat and bourgeoisie can be fought out – the democratic republic no longer officially recognizes differences of property. Wealth here employs its power indirectly, but all the more surely.*” – Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 1884³⁸

And again:

“*Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that it is precisely the democratic republic which is the logical form of bourgeois rule. [...] And yet the democratic republic always remains the last form of bourgeois rule, that in which it goes to pieces.*” – Friedrich Engels, *Letter to Eduard Bernstein, 24 March 1884*³⁹

Parliament, bourgeois elections are one with the democratic republic, the ultimate political and institutional form of capitalism. What is more, the institutional form conforms to the competitive movement of total capital. Symmetrically, for the proletariat, the democratic republic is the terrain most suitable for the booming of a class struggle purged of the faded finery and vestiges of a precapitalist past.

“*The Republic finally appears in Europe as what it is in its essence, as it really is in America, as the most accomplished form of bourgeois domination. [...] The working class can no longer have illusions about what the Republic is: the form of the state where the domination of the bourgeoisie takes on its ultimate expression, truly accomplished. In the modern Republic, finally is established pure political equality, an equality still subject in all the monarchies to certain restrictions. And this political equality, is it anything else than to declare that class antagonisms do not concern the State, that the bourgeois have as much right to be bourgeois as the workers to be proletarian? [...] If it [the Republic] is the accomplished form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, the modern republic is at the same time the form of the state where the class struggle rids itself of its last restraints and where it prepares its terrain of struggle. The modern republic is precisely nothing other than that terrain of struggle. [...] For that class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat to have a decisive outcome, it is necessary that the two classes be sufficiently developed in the country concerned, at least in the big cities*”. Friedrich Engels, “*The Republic in Spain, 1 March 1873*”⁴⁰

The republic, its functional organisation, its democratic methods of selection of its generals is thus grounds entirely occupied by the class enemy. Better said, the democratic republic is the fortress to be demolished in order to clear the way for the dictatorship of the proletariat and then for communism. There is no question of considering its mechanisms and institutions as a kind of neutral ground where the revolutionary proletariat and its organs could wage a part of the war against the ruling classes. It is not a question of propaganda and opportunities to make the voice of the exploited heard. If workers’ autonomy is unable to create and expand its propaganda channels within its own class, it will not succeed by electoral and trade union shortcuts.

To participate in it is to support the well-maintained illusion that democracy is the solution to exploitation and oppressions.

And their democracy is the exact opposite of the organisation of the proletariat into a ruling class. There, the sacrosanct principle of the separation of powers, legislative, executive and judicial, is applied. Here, these three functions are integrated and unified within a centralised structure of workers’ councils.

³⁷ Point 1: <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch08.htm>

³⁸ Chapter IX, “Barbarism and Civilisation”: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/ch09.htm>

³⁹ https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/letters/84_03_24.htm

⁴⁰ <https://www.marxists.org/francais/engels/works/1873/03/kmfe18730103.htm> (not currently available online in English). Our translation.

We must also reject the nonsense about direct democracy being the magic antidote to the confiscation of power by the ruling classes. Direct or participatory democracy expresses itself essentially, according to its ideologues on the far right and the far left, by means of that most rudimentary democratic mechanism, the referendum. This non-elective mechanism is more backward than the election of a legislature because it further reduces the margin of expression of the voters by confining it to a plebiscitary demonstration, for or against this or that. It also deprives the voters of the formal right to choose between different political programmes and, above all, it deprives them of the faculty of parliamentary representation, relegating them to the role of occasional and marginalised censors. And let's not forget that so-called participatory democracy does not question the tripartition of powers, and even less the dictatorship of capital that generates it, in the same way as the more elaborate and modern forms of bourgeois democracy. The ideology of direct democracy fits in very well with Bonapartism and with democratic regimes corrected by presidentialism.

The intransigent opposition to bourgeois democracy should not, however, lead to the blindness of considering that an extra-parliamentary authoritarian regime and a democratic republic are equivalent. Thus, communists recognise the capacity of the broadest electoral democratic exercise to make emerge, albeit in a distorted way, the political opinions of voters. They therefore study elections carefully.

“Universal suffrage is an index of the level reached by the various classes in their understanding of their problems. It shows how the various classes are inclined to solve their problems.”, Lenin, *“The Constituent Assembly Elections and The Dictatorship of the Proletariat”*, 16 December 1919⁴¹

This being the case, the proletariat does not choose between the two classical expressions – the democratic republic and extra-legal despotism – and all their variants in between of the dictatorship of capital. But it insists that it is the first option which constitutes the best scenario for the expression of its independent political force. And it remembers that, despite their apparent opposition, they are two perfectly reversible options of the domination of the propertied classes, as many examples from the history of the class struggle have shown. This reversibility of the institutional forms of the dictatorship of capital has given way to a more or less developed osmosis between them. Despotic regimes have undergone democratic transitions, and many historical democracies have armed themselves with freedom-killing laws and/or diminished the legislative role of parliament as well as adopting elective mechanisms that better protect the system. On the other hand, when minority fractions of the ruling classes push for regime change incompatible with the general interest of capital, they can be shoved aside or even repressed.

Recent history has shown that democracy is the best instrument for the cohesion of civil society and the submission of the oppressed classes to the dominant classes. And it is bourgeois democracy which has the task of liquidating the most determined revolutionary surges, delegating the work of “finishing off” to its extra-legal armed forces, to its bands of assassins in rags led by its braided generals.

Consequently, it is obvious that placing confidence in bourgeois democracy to prevent the assaults of its extra-legal gangs is the worst illusion that you can entertain. The anti-dictatorial front in the name of democracy is the shortest route to defeat. Unfortunately, history has taught us that the only weapon which proletarians have to avoid their political destruction is independent action and autonomous organisation.

MC/KPK, 2 August 2022

⁴¹ Part 6, point 1: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/dec/16.htm>