

CHRESTOMATHY OF THE ICC

(INTERNATIONAL «COMMUNIST» CURRENT)

Or The Mirror of an ideological apparatus of a postmodern neo-stalinist sect

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Parasitism and Sectology



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This lie [*Stalinism*], in its various forms, has been the greatest enemy of marxism, of communism and the socialist revolution this century. It has helped to bury the revolutionary traditions of the working class under an immense dung-heap of mystifications, it has turned millions and millions of proletarians away from the very idea of challenging capitalism and of changing society.

(Alan COHEN, ***THE DECADENCE OF SHAMANS or shamanism as a key to the secrets of communism***, Unpopular books, London 1991)

In Memory of Osip Mandelstam (1891 – 1938)

THE STALIN EPIGRAM

Мы живем, под собою не чуя страны,
Наши речи за десять шагов не слышны,
А где хватит на подразговорца, -
Там помянут кремлевского горца...
Его толстые пальцы, как черви жирны
А слова, как пудовые гири, верны
Тараканьи смеются усища
И сияют его голенища
А вокруг него сброд тонкошеих вождей
Он играет услугами полулюдей
Кто мяучет, кто плачет, кто хнычет
Лишь один он бабачит и тычет.
Как подковы кует за указом указ –
Кому в пах, кому в лоб, кому в бровь, кому в глаз
Что ни казнь у него, - то малина
И широкая грудь осетина.

We are living, but can't feel the land where we stay,
More than ten steps away you can't hear what we say.
But if people would talk on occasion,
They should mention the Kremlin Caucasian.
His thick fingers are bulky and fat like live-baits,
And his accurate words are as heavy as weights.
Cucaracha's moustaches are screaming,
And his boot-tops are shining and gleaming.
But around him a crowd of thin-necked henchmen,
And he plays with the services of these half-men.
Some are whistling, some meowing, some sniffing,
He's alone booming, poking and whiffing.
He is forging his rules and decrees like horseshoes –
Into groins, into foreheads, in eyes, and eyebrows.
Every killing for him is delight,
And Ossetian torso is wide.

Old stalinist poetry : Aragon

PRÉLUDE AU TEMPS DES CERISES

(Persécuté-Persécuteur, Denoël, 1931)

Il s'agit de préparer le procès monstre
d'un monde monstrueux
Aiguisez demain sur la pierre
Préparez les conseils d'ouvriers et soldats
Constituez le tribunal révolutionnaire
J'appelle la Terreur du fond de mes poumons
Je chante le Guépéou qui se forme
en France à l'heure qu'il est
Je chante le Guépéou nécessaire de France

Je chante les Guépéous de nulle part et de partout

Je demande un Guépéou pour préparer la fin d'un monde

Demandez un Guépéou pour préparer la fin d'un monde
pour défendre ceux qui sont trahis
pour défendre ceux qui sont toujours trahis

Demandez un Guépéou vous qu'on plie et vous qu'on tue

Demandez un Guépéou

Il vous faut un Guépéou

Vive le Guépéou véritable image de la grandeur matérialiste

Vive le Guépéou contre Dieu Chiappe et la Marseillaise
Vive le Guépéou contre le pape et les poux
Vive le Guépéou contre la résignation des banques
Vive le Guépéou contre les manœuvres de l'Est
Vive le Guépéou contre la famille
Vive le Guépéou contre les lois scélérates
Vive le Guépéou contre le socialisme des assassins du type
Caballero Boncour Mac Donald Zoergibel

Vive le Guépéou contre tous les ennemis du prolétariat.

[Aragon] a tout piétiné, y compris sa propre ombre, tout «souillé» de ses premières amours, tout «pollué» de ses dernières «déjections». Que le patriote bêlant dont l'oreille et le «foie» s'épanouissent au cocorico d'Aragon ne se gêne pas; il le trouvera dans la poubelle au bas de mon escalier, et il peut l'y ramasser. Et maintenant je vais me laver les mains et me rincer la bouche.

Jean MALAQUAIS, 1947, Le nommé Louis Aragon ou le patriote professionnel (reprint Syllepse)

Chrestomathy

Political Parasitism: The "CBG" Does the Bourgeoisie's Work

In the **International Review** No. 82, and in our territorial press in 12 countries, the ICC published articles on its 11th Congress. These articles informed the revolutionary milieu and the working class about the political struggle which has taken place in the ICC recently for the establishment of a really marxist functioning at all levels of our organizational life. At the center of this combat was the overcoming of what Lenin called the "circle spirit". This required in particular the liquidation of informal groupings based on personal loyalties and petty bourgeois individualism, what Rosa Luxemburg referred to as "tribes" or "clans".

The articles we published placed the present combat in continuity with that waged by the Marxists against the Bakuninists in the 1st International, by the Bolsheviks against Menshevism in the Russian party, but also by the ICC throughout its history. In particular, we affirmed the petty bourgeois anti-organizational basis of the different splits which have taken place in the history of the ICC, which were neither motivated nor justified by political divergences. They were the result of non-marxist, non-proletarian organizational behavior, of what Lenin called the anarchism of the intelligentsia and the literary bohemian.

A problem of the whole milieu

We did not report in our press on our internal debate out of exhibitionism, but because we are convinced that the problems we are confronting are not at all specific to the ICC. We are convinced that the ICC would not have been able to survive without the radical stamping out of the anarchism in organizational matters in our ranks. We see the same danger threatening the revolutionary milieu as a whole. The weight of the ideas and behavior of the petty bourgeoisie, its resistance to organizational discipline and collective principles, has affected all groups to a greater or lesser extent. The break in organic continuity with revolutionary organizations of the past through 50 years of counter revolution, the interruption of the living process of the passing on of priceless organizational experience from one generation of marxists to the next, has made the new generation of proletarian militants after 1968 particularly vulnerable to the influence of the petty bourgeoisie in revolt (student and protest movements, etc).

Thus, our present struggle is not the internal affair of the ICC. The Congress articles are aimed at the defense of the entire proletarian milieu. They constitute an appeal to all serious marxist groupings to clarify on the proletarian concept of functioning, and to make known the lesson of their struggle with petty bourgeois disorganization. The revolutionary milieu as a whole needs to be much more vigilant towards the intrusion of modes of behavior foreign to the proletariat. It needs to consciously and openly organize its own defense.

The attack of parasitism against the revolutionary camp

The first public reaction to our articles on our 11th Congress came, not from within the proletarian milieu, but from a group openly hostile to it. Under the heading "The ICC Reaches Waco", the so-called Communist Bulletin Group, in its 16th and last "Bulletin" is not ashamed to follow in the best traditions of the bourgeoisie by denigrating Marxist organizations.

"Salem or Waco would have been an appropriate venue for this particular congress. While it is tempting to lampoon or ridicule the monstrous proceedings of this congress-cum-kangaroo court, where, inter alia, Bakunin and Lassalle were denounced as "not necessarily" police spies and Martov characterized as an "anarchist", the overwhelming emotion is of great sadness that a once so dynamic and positive organization should be reduced to this sorry state".

"In the best Stalinist tradition the ICC then proceeds to rewrite its history (just as it did after the 1985 split) to show that every major difference (...) has been caused not by militants with different opinions of a question but by the intrusion of alien ideologies into the body of the ICC".

"What the ICC cannot grasp is that it is their own monolithic practice that is the problem here. What happened at the 11th congress was surely simply the bureaucratic triumph of one clan over another, a jostling for control of the Central Organs, something that was widely predicted after the death of their founder member MC".

For the CBG, what took place at the ICC Congress must have been *"two or more days of psychological battering. Readers who have any knowledge of the brainwashing techniques of religious sects will understand this process. Those who have read of the mental tortures inflicted on those who confessed to impossible "crimes" at the Moscow Show Trials will, likewise, suss what went on".*

And here, the CBG quotes itself from 1982, after its members left the ICC:

"For every militant there will always be the question: How far can I go in this discussion before I am condemned as an alien force, a menace, a petty bourgeois? How far can I go before I am regarded with suspicion? How far before I am a police spy?"

These quotations speak for themselves.

They reveal better than anything else the true nature, not of the ICC but of the "CBG". Their message is clear: revolutionary organizations are like the mafia. "*Power struggles*" take place exactly as within the bourgeoisie.

The struggle against clans, which the entire 11th Congress, **unanimously** supported, is turned by the CBG into "*surely*" a struggle between clans. Central organs are inevitably "*monolithic*", the identification of the penetration of non-proletarian influences, a prime task of revolutionaries, is presented as a means of destroying "*opponents*". The methods of clarification of proletarian organizations - open debate in the whole organization the publication of its results to inform the working class - becomes the "*brainwashing*" method of religious sects.

It is not only the whole present day revolutionary milieu which is being attacked here. It is the entire history and all the traditions of the workers' movement which are being abused.

In reality, the lies and slanders of the CBG are perfectly in line with the campaign of the world bourgeoisie about the alleged death of communism and of marxism. At the center of this propaganda is the greatest lie in history: that the organizational rigor of Lenin and the Bolsheviks necessarily led to Stalinism. In the CBG's version of this propaganda, it is the Bolshevism of the ICC which "*necessarily*" leads to its alleged "*Stalinism*". Evidently, the CBG neither knows what the revolutionary milieu is, nor does it know what Stalinism is about.

What has provoked the petty bourgeois frenzy of the CBG is once again the resolute, unmistakable manner with which the ICC has affirmed its allegiance to the organizational approach of Lenin. We can assure all the parasitic elements: the more the bourgeoisie attacks the history of our class, the more proudly we will affirm our allegiance to Bolshevism.

By pouring garbage upon the proletarian vanguard, the CBG has demonstrated once again that it is not a part of the revolutionary milieu, but its opponent. The fact that the ICC has waged the most important organizational struggle in its history, does not interest it in the least.

In itself, there is nothing new in the fact that those revolutionaries who defend organizational rigor against the petty bourgeoisie are attacked, even denigrated. Marx became the object of a whole bourgeois campaign because of his resistance to Bakunin's Alliance. Lenin was personally insulted because of his stand against the Mensheviks in 1903: not only by the reformists and open opportunists, but even by comrades such as Trotsky. But nobody **within** the workers movement, not Trotsky and not even the reformists ever spoke of Marx or Lenin's struggle in the terms employed by the CBG. The difference is that the "polemic" of the CBG is clearly aimed at the destruction of the revolutionary milieu - not just the ICC.

The nature of parasitism

We will have to disappoint the CBG, who claim that the ICC deals with those who disagree with it by labeling them as police spies. Although the CBG "disagrees" with us, we consider them to be neither spies nor a bourgeois organization. People like the CBG do not have a bourgeois political platform. Programmatically, they even adhere to certain proletarian positions. They are against trade unions and support for "national liberation" struggles.

But if their political positions tend to prevent them from joining the bourgeoisie, their organizational behavior bars them from any participation in the life of the proletariat. Their main activity consists in attacking the marxist revolutionary groups. The "Communist Bulletin" No. 16 perfectly illustrates this. For several years the group did not even publish. The editorial of No. 16 informs us: *"It is an open secret that for at least two years the organization has ceased to function in any meaningful way (...) it is a group in name only"*. The group pretends that after such inactivity and organizational meaninglessness it has suddenly produced a new "bulletin" for the purpose of informing the world that it has decided to ...

cease existence! But it is clear that in fact the real reason for publication was to attack the ICC Congress! Significantly, the number 16 does not attack the bourgeoisie; there is no defense of proletarian internationalism in face of the Balkan War, for instance. This is in line with the other 15 issues which were also mainly devoted to slandering proletarian groups. And we feel sure that despite their announced dissolution they will continue to do so. In fact the abandonment of the formal pretense of being a political group will allow them to concentrate even more exclusively on the "work" of denigrating the marxist camp.

The existence of groups which, while being neither mandated nor paid by the bourgeoisie, nevertheless voluntarily do part of the job of the ruling class, is a highly significant phenomenon. In the marxist movement we call such people parasites, bloodsuckers living on the backs of the revolutionary forces. They do not attack the marxist camp out of allegiance to capital, but out of a blind and impotent hatred for the mode of life of the working class, the collective and impersonal nature of its struggle. Such petty bourgeois and declassed elements are motivated by a spirit of vengeance towards a political movement which cannot afford to make concessions to their individualist needs, to their cravings for self-presentation, flattery and pompousness.

The trajectory of the "CBG"

In order to grasp the nature of this parasitism (which is not new in the workers movement), it is necessary to study its origins and development. The CBG can serve as a typical example. Its origins lie in the circle phase of the new generation of revolutionaries developing after 1968, giving rise to a small group of militants linked by a mixture of political and personal loyalties. The informal group in question broke with

the Communist Workers Organization (CWO) and moved towards the ICC towards the end of the 1970s. In the discussions at that time we criticized the fact that they wanted to enter the ICC "as a group" rather than individually. This posed the danger that they might form an organization within the organization on a non-political, affinitary basis thus menacing proletarian organizational unity. We also condemned the fact that, on leaving the CWO, they had taken part of its material with them - a breach of revolutionary principles.

Inside the ICC, the group tried to maintain its informal separate identity, despite the fact that the pressure within an international centralized organization to submit each of its parts to the whole must have been much greater than within the CWO. However, the "autonomy" of the "friends" who later formed the CBG could survive due to the fact that within the ICC other such groupings, the leftovers of the circles out of which the ICC was formed, continued to exist. This was particularly the case for our British section, World Revolution, which the ex-CWO members joined, and which was divided through the existence of two already existing "clans". These clans quickly became the main obstacle to the application in practice of the statutes of the ICC in all of its parts.

When the ICC, around this time was infiltrated by an agent of the state, Chenier, a member of Mitterrand's French Socialist Party, who rejoined this party after his expulsion from the ICC, the British section thus became the main target of his manipulations. As a result of these manipulations, and with the uncovering of the agent Chenier by the organization, half of our British section left the ICC. None of them were expelled, contrary to the assertions of the CBG.

The ex-CWO elements, who also left at this moment, then formed the "CBG".

We can draw the following lessons:

- although they had no particular political positions distinguishing them from others, basically the same clique entered and left both the CWO and the ICC before becoming the "CBG". This reveals the unwillingness and incapacity of these people to integrate themselves into the workers' movement, to surrender their petty group identity to something greater than themselves.
- although they claim to have been expelled from the ICC, or that they could not remain within it because of its "inability to debate", in reality these people ran away from the political debates taking place in the organization. In the name of "fighting sectarianism" they turned their backs on the two most important communist organizations existing in Britain, the CWO and the ICC - despite the absence of any major political divergence. This is the way in which they "struggle against sectarianism".

The milieu should not be deceived by the empty phrases about "monolithism" and the ICC's supposed "fear of debate". The ICC stands in the tradition of the Italian Left, of Bilan which during the Spanish Civil War even refused to expel or split with the

minority openly calling for participation in imperialist war - since political clarification must always precede any political separation.

- what the CBG objected to in the ICC was its rigorous proletarian method of debate, via polemic and polarization, where a spade is called a spade, and a petty bourgeois or opportunist stance is called by name. An atmosphere hardly congenial for circles and clans with their double language and false diplomacy, their personal loyalties and disloyalties. And certainly one which did not please the petty bourgeois cowards who ran away from political confrontation and withdrew from the life of the class.

- graver still, and for the second time, the future CBG participated in the theft of the material of the organization it was leaving. They justified this with the vision of the Marxist party as a stockholders company: whoever invests their time in the ICC has the right to take their share of its resources with them when they leave. Moreover they allowed themselves to determine what "share" they would entitle themselves to. It should go without saying that if such methods were to be accepted, they would mean the end of the very possibility of the existence of marxist organizations. Revolutionary principles are here replaced by the bourgeois law of the jungle:

- when the ICC set out to recover the stolen resources of the organization, these courageous "revolutionaries" threatened to call the police against us;

- the future CBG was one of the main collaborators of the *agent provocateur* Chenier within the organization, and his main defender after his expulsion. This is what is behind the dark references to the ICC's supposed branding of "dissidents" as police agents. The ICC is supposed, according to the lies of the CBG, to have denounced Chenier because he disagreed with the majority of the ICC on the analysis of the French elections of 1981. Such an accusation at random is just as much a crime against revolutionary organizations as setting the police on them. Revolutionaries who disagree with a certain judgment of the organization, in particular the militant himself under accusation, have not only the right but the duty to object, even to demand that a jury of honor with the participation of other revolutionary groups rejudge a particular case. But in the workers' movement of the past it would have been unthinkable to suggest a workers' organization would raise such a grave accusation for any other motive than its defense against the state. Such accusations can only destroy the trust and confidence in the organization and its central organs without which its defense against state infiltration becomes impossible.

A blind and impotent hatred

It is this total resistance by petty bourgeois and declassed anarchist elements against their integration into and subordination to the great world historic mission of the proletariat, which despite sympathies for certain of its political positions leads to parasitism, to open hatred and political sabotage of the marxist movement.

The sordid and corrosive reality of the CBG itself gives the lie to its claims to have left the ICC *"in order to be able to discuss"*. Here again, we will let the parasites speak for themselves. First of all their abandonment of any allegiance to the proletariat begins to be openly theoretized. *"A very bleak vision of the nature of the period began to be articulated"*, they tell us; *"elements within the CBG asked whether the class could now emerge **at all?**"*.

In face of the "difficult debate", here is how the CBG, this "anti-monolithic" giants, copes with "divergences": *"We were ill-equipped to confront these questions. There was a more-or-less deafening silence in response to them (...) the debate didn't so much fizzle out as remain largely ignored. This was profoundly unhealthy for the organization. The CBG had prided itself on being open to any discussions within the revolutionary movement, but here it was in one of its own debates on a subject at the very heart of its existence plugging its ears and shutting its mouth"*.

It is therefore only logical that at the end of its crusade against the Marxist concept of organizational and methodological rigor as the prerequisite for any real debate, the CBG "discovers" that organisation itself blocks discussion: *"In order to allow this debate to take place (...) we have decided to end the life of the CBG"*.

The organization as barrier to debate! Long live anarchism! Long live organizational liquidationism! Imagine the gratitude of the ruling class in face of the propagation of such "principles" in the name of "marxism"!

Parasitism: spearhead against the proletarian forces

Although the class domination of the bourgeoisie is, for the moment, certainly not threatened, the main aspects of the present world situation oblige it to be particularly vigilant in the defense of its interests. The inexorable deepening of its economic crisis, the sharpening of imperialist tensions, and the resistance of a generation of the working class which has not yet suffered a decisive defeat, contain the perspective of a dramatic destabilization of bourgeois society. All of this imposes on the bourgeoisie the world historic task of destroying the proletariat's revolutionary Marxist vanguard. As insignificant as the Marxist camp appears today, the ruling class is already obliged to make serious efforts to disrupt and weaken it.

At the time of the 1st International the bourgeoisie itself undertook the task of public denigration of proletarian revolutionaries. The entire bourgeois press slandered the International Workers' Association and its General Council, opposing to the alleged "dictatorial centralism" of Marx the allures of its own progressive and revolutionary past.

Today, on the contrary, the bourgeoisie of the leading powers has no interest in drawing attention to revolutionary organizations which, for the moment, are so minoritarian that even their names are not generally known among workers. Moreover, a direct attack of

the state against them, whether through its media or its organs of repression, might provoke a reflex of solidarity among a politically significant minority of more class conscious workers. In this situation, the bourgeoisie prefers to keep a low profile and leave the work of denigration of the milieu to the political parasites. These parasites, without wanting to or even being aware of it, are integrated into the anti -proletarian strategy of the ruling class.

The bourgeoisie knows very well that the best and most thorough means of destroying the revolutionary camp is from within, by denigrating, demoralizing and dividing it. The parasites assume this task without even having to be asked. By presenting the marxist groups as Stalinist, as bourgeois sects dominated by power struggles, as the mirror image of the bourgeoisie itself, as historically insignificant, they support the offensive of capital against the proletariat. By destroying the reputation of the milieu, parasitism not only contributes to the political subversion of the proletarian forces today - it prepares the terrain for the politically effective repression of the marxist camp in the future. If the bourgeoisie stays in the background today in order to allow parasitism to do its dirty work today, it is with the intention of emerging from the shadows to decapitate the revolutionary vanguard tomorrow.

The incapacity of most of the revolutionary groups to recognize the real character of the parasitic groups is one of the greatest weaknesses of the milieu today. The ICC is determined to assume its responsibility in combatting this weakness. It is high time for the serious groups, for the milieu as a whole to organize its own defense against the most rotten elements of the vengeful petty bourgeoisie. Instead of opportunistically flirting with such groups, it is the responsibility of the milieu to wage a merciless and unrelenting struggle against political parasitism. The formation of the future class party, the success of the liberation struggle of the proletariat, will depend to a large extent on our capacity to wage this combat to the end.

Krespel, 01.09.95

THESES ON PARASITISM

1) Throughout its history, the workers' movement has had to deal with the penetration into its ranks of alien ideologies, coming either from the ruling class or from the petty bourgeoisie. This penetration has taken a number of forms within working class organisations. Among the most widespread and best-known we can point to:

- sectarianism
- individualism
- opportunism
- adventurism
- putschism

2) Sectarianism is the typical expression of a petty bourgeois conception of organisation. It reflects the petty-bourgeois mindset of wanting to be king of your own little castle, and it manifests itself in the tendency to place the particular interests and concepts of one organisation above those of the movement as a whole. In the sectarian vision, the organisation is "all alone in the world" and it displays a regal disdain towards all the other organisations that belong to the proletarian camp, seen as "rivals" or even "enemies". As it feels threatened by the latter, the sectarian organisation in general refuses to engage in debate and polemic with them. It prefers to take refuge in its "splendid isolation", acting as though the others did not exist, or else obstinately putting forward what distinguishes itself from the others without taking into account what it has in common with them.

3) Individualism can also derive from petty bourgeois influences, or from directly bourgeois ones. From the ruling class it takes up the official ideology which sees individuals as the subject of history, which glorifies the "self-made man" and justifies the "struggle of each against all". However, it is above all through the vehicle of the petty bourgeoisie that it penetrates into the organisations of the proletariat, particularly through newly proletarianised elements coming from strata like the peasantry and the artisans (this was notably the case last century) or from the intellectual and student milieu (this has been especially true since the historic resurgence of the working class at the end of the 60s). Individualism expresses itself mainly through the tendency :

- to see the organisation not as a collective whole but as a sum of individuals in which relations between persons take precedence over political and statutory relations;
- to advance one's own "desires" and "interests" as opposed to the needs of the organisation;
- consequently, to resist the discipline necessary within the organisation;
- to look for "personal realisation" through militant activity;

- to adopt an attitude of constantly contesting the central organs, which are accused of trying to crush individuality; the complementary attitude is that of looking for “promotion” through gaining a place in these organs;
- more generally, to adhere to an élitist view of the organisation in which you aspire to be one of the “first class militants” while developing a contemptuous attitude to those seen as “second class militants”.

4) Opportunism, which has historically constituted the most serious danger for the organisations of the proletariat, is another expression of the penetration of petty bourgeois ideology. One of its motor-forces is impatience, which expresses the viewpoint of a social stratum doomed to impotence, having no future on the scale of history. Its other motor is the tendency to try to conciliate between the interests and positions of the two major classes in society, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. From this starting point, opportunism distinguishes itself by the fact that it tends to sacrifice the general and historic interests of the proletariat to the illusion of immediate and circumstantial “successes”. But since for the working class there is no opposition between its struggle inside capitalism and its historical combat for the abolition of the system, the politics of opportunism in the end lead to sacrificing the immediate interests of the proletariat as well, in particular by pushing the class to compromise with the interests and positions of the bourgeoisie. In the final analysis, at crucial historical moments, such as imperialist war and proletarian revolution, opportunist political currents are led to join the enemy camp, as was the case with the majority of the Socialist parties during World War I, and with the Communist parties on the eve of World War II.

5) Adventurism (or putschism) presents itself as the opposite of opportunism. Under cover of “intransigence” and “radicalism” it declares itself to be ready at all times to launch the attack on the bourgeoisie, to enter into the “decisive” combat when the conditions for such a combat don’t yet exist for the proletariat. And in so doing it does not hesitate to qualify as opportunist and conciliationist, even as “traitorous”, the authentically proletarian and marxist current which is concerned to prevent the working class from being drawn into a struggle which would be lost in advance. In reality, deriving from the same source as opportunism - petty bourgeois impatience - it has frequently converged with the latter. History is rich in examples in which opportunist currents have supported putschist currents or have been converted to putschist radicalism. Thus, at the beginning of the century, the right wing of German Social Democracy, against the opposition of its left wing represented notably by Rosa Luxemburg, gave its support to the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries, who were adepts of terrorism. Similarly, in January 1919, when even Rosa Luxemburg had pronounced against an insurrection by the Berlin workers, following the provocation by the Social Democratic government, the Independents, who had only just left this government themselves, rushed into an insurrection which ended in a massacre of thousands of workers, including the main communist leaders.

6) The combat against the penetration of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology into the organisations of the class, as well as against its different manifestations, is a

permanent responsibility for revolutionaries. In fact, it can even be said that it is the main combat which the authentically proletarian and revolutionary currents have had to wage within the organisations of the class, to the extent that it is much more difficult than the direct fight against the declared and official forces of the bourgeoisie. The fight against sects and sectarianism was one of the first waged by Marx and Engels, particularly within the International Workingmen's Association (IWA). Similarly, the fight against individualism, notably in the form of anarchism, mobilised not only the latter but also the marxists of the Second International (particularly Luxemburg and Lenin). The combat against opportunism has certainly been the most constant and systematic carried out by the revolutionary current since its origins:

- against Lassallean "state socialism" in the 1860s and 1870s;
- against all the Bernstein-type revisionists and reformists at the turn of the century;
- against Menshevism;
- against Kautsky's centrism on immediately before, during, and after World War I;
- against the degeneration of the Communist International and the Communist parties throughout the 20s and at the beginning of the 30s;
- against the degeneration of the Trotskyist current during the 1930s.

The fight against putschism has not been as constant a necessity as the struggle against opportunism. However, it has been waged since the first steps of the workers' movement (against the immediatist Willich-Schapper tendency in the Communist League, against the Bakuninist adventures over the Lyon "Commune" in 1870 and the civil war in Spain in 1873). Similarly, it was particularly important during the revolutionary wave of 1917-23: in particular, it was largely the Bolsheviks' ability to carry out this struggle in July 1917 that allowed the October revolution to take place.

7) The preceding examples show that the impact of these different manifestations of the penetration of alien ideologies depends closely on:

- the historic period;
- the moment in the development of the working class;
- the responsibilities of the class in this or that circumstance.

For example, one of the most important expressions of the penetration of petty bourgeois ideology, and the one most explicitly fought against, opportunism, even if it is a permanent feature in the history of the workers' movement, found its terrain par excellence in the parties of the Second International, during a period:

- in which illusions in conciliation with the bourgeoisie flourished because of the prosperity of capitalism and the real advances in the living conditions of the working class;
- in which the existence of mass parties gave credence to the idea that mere pressure from these parties could gradually lead capitalism to transform itself into socialism.

Similarly, the penetration of opportunism into the parties of the Third International was strongly determined by the ebb in the revolutionary wave. This encouraged the idea that it was possible to gain an audience in the working masses by making concessions to their illusions on questions like parliamentarism, trade unionism or the nature of the “Socialist” parties.

The importance of the historic moment to the different type of penetration of alien ideologies into the class is revealed even more clearly when it comes to sectarianism. This was particularly significant at the very beginning of the workers’ movement, when the proletariat was only just emerging from the artisans and journeymen’s societies with their rituals and trade secrets. Again, it went through a major revival in the depth of the counter-revolution with the Bordigist current, which saw withdrawing into its shell as an (obviously false) way of protecting itself from the threat of opportunism.

8) The phenomenon of political parasitism, which to a large extent is also the result of the penetration of alien ideologies into the working class, has not been accorded, within the history of the workers’ movement, the same amount of attention as other phenomena such as opportunism. This has been the case because parasitism has only significantly affected proletarian organisations in very specific moments in history. Opportunism, for example, constitutes a constant menace for proletarian organisations and it expresses itself above all when the latter are going through their greatest phases of development. By contrast, parasitism does not basically manifest itself at the time of the most important movements of the class. On the contrary, it is in a period of immaturity of the movement when the organisations of the class still have a weak impact and not very strong traditions that parasitism finds its most fertile soil. This is linked to the very nature of parasitism, which, to be effective, has to relate to elements looking for class positions but who find it hard to distinguish real revolutionary organisations from currents whose only reason for existing is to live at the expense of the former, to sabotage their activities, indeed to destroy them. At the same time, the phenomenon of parasitism, again by its nature, does not appear at the very beginning of the development of the organisations of the class but when they have already been constituted and have proved that they really defend proletarian interests. These are indeed the elements which we find in the first historic manifestation of political parasitism, the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, which sought to sabotage the combat of the IWA and to destroy it.

9) It was Marx and Engels who first identified the threat of parasitism to proletarian organisations:

“It is high time to put an end, once and for all, to the internal conflicts provoked daily in our Association by the presence of this parasitic body. These quarrels only serve to waste energies which should be used to fight against the bourgeois regime. By paralysing the activity of the International against the enemies of the working class, the Alliance admirably serves the bourgeoisies and the governments” (Engels, “The General Council to all the members of the International” - a warning against Bakunin’s Alliance).

Thus the notion of political parasitism is not at all an “ICC invention”. It was the IWA which was the first to be confronted with this threat against the proletarian movement, which it identified and fought. It was the IWA, beginning with Marx and Engels, who already characterised the parasites as politicised elements who, while claiming to adhere to the programme and organisations of the proletariat, concentrated their efforts on the combat not against the ruling class but against the organisations of the revolutionary class. The essence of their activity was to denigrate and manoeuvre against the communist camp, even if they claimed to belong to it and to serve it:

“For the first time in the history of the class struggle, we are confronted with a secret conspiracy at the heart of the working class whose aim is to destroy not the existing regime of exploitation, but the very Association which represents the bitterest enemy of this regime” (Engels, Report to the Hague Congress on the Alliance).

10) To the extent that the workers’ movement, in the shape of the IWA, possesses a rich experience of struggle against parasitism, it is of the utmost importance, if we are to face up to the present-day parasitic offensives and arm ourselves against them, to recall the principal lessons of this past struggle. These lessons concern a whole series of aspects:

- the moment of parasitism’s appearance;
- its specificities with regard to other dangers facing proletarian organisations;
- its recruiting ground;
- its methods;
- the most effective means of fighting it.

In fact, as we shall see, on all these aspects there is a striking similarity between the situation facing the proletarian milieu today and the one confronted by the IWA.

11) Although it affected a working class which was still historically inexperienced, parasitism only appears historically as an enemy of the workers’ movement when the latter has reached a certain level of maturity, having gone beyond the infantile sectarian stage.

“The first phase of the struggle of the proletariat was characterised by the movement of the sects. This was justified in a period in which the proletariat had not developed sufficiently to act as a class” (Marx/Engels).

It was the appearance of marxism, the maturation of proletarian class consciousness and the capacity of the class and its vanguard to organise the struggle which set the workers’ movement on a healthy foundation:

“From this moment on, when the movement of the working class had become a reality, the fantastic utopias were called upon to disappear....because the place of these utopias had been taken by a clear understanding of the historical conditions of this movement and

*because the forces of a combat organisation of the working class were more and more being gathered together” (Marx, first draft of *The Civil War in France*).*

In fact, parasitism appeared historically in response to the foundation of the First International, which Engels described as “*the means to progressively dissolve and absorb all the different little sects*” (Engels, letter to Kelly/Vischnevetsky).

In other words, the International was the instrument that obliged the different components of the workers’ movement to embark upon a collective and public process of clarification, and to submit to a unified, impersonal, proletarian organisational discipline. It was in resistance to this international “dissolution and absorption” of all these non-proletarian programmatic and organisational particularities and autonomies that parasitism first declared war on the revolutionary movement:

*“The sects, which at the beginning had been a lever to the movement, became an obstacle to as soon as they were no longer on the order of the day; they then became reactionary. The proof of this is the sects in France and Britain, and recently the Lassalleans in Germany, where after years of supporting the organisation of the proletariat, they have become mere instruments of the police” (Marx/Engels, *The so-called split in the International*).*

12) It is this dynamic framework of analysis developed by the First International that explains why the present period, that of the 80s and above all of the 90s, has witnessed a development of parasitism unprecedented since the time of the Alliance and the Lassallean current. For today we are confronted with all sorts of informal regroupments, often acting in the shadows, claiming to belong to the camp of the communist left, but actually devoting their energies to fighting the existing marxist organisations rather than the bourgeois regime. As in the time of Marx and Engels, the function of this reactionary parasitic wave is to sabotage the development of open debate and proletarian clarification, and to prevent the establishment of rules of behaviour that link all members of the proletarian camp. The existence:

- of an international marxist current like the ICC, which rejects sectarianism and monolithism;
- of public polemics between revolutionary organisations;
- of the current debate about marxist organisational principles and the defence of the revolutionary milieu;
- of new revolutionary elements searching for the real marxist organisational and programmatic traditions,

are among the most important elements presently provoking the hatred and offensive of political parasitism.

As we saw with the experience of the IWA, it is only in periods when the workers’ movement leaves behind a stage of basic immaturity and reaches a qualitatively

superior level, a specifically communist level, that parasitism becomes its main opponent. In the current period, this immaturity is not the product of the youth of the workers' movement as a whole, as in the days of the IWA, but is above all the result of the 50 years of counter-revolution which followed the defeat of the revolutionary wave of 1917-23. Today, it is this break in organic continuity with the traditions of past generations of revolutionaries which above all else explains why there is such a weight of petty bourgeois anti-organisational reflexes and behaviour among so many of the elements who lay claim to marxism and the communist left.

13) There are a whole series of similarities between the conditions and characteristics of the emergence of parasitism in the days of the IWA, and of parasitism today. However, we should also note an important difference between the two periods: last century, parasitism largely took the form of a structured and centralised organisation **within** the class' organisation, whereas today its form is essentially that of little groups, or even of "non-organised" elements (though the two often work together). This difference does not call into question the fundamental identity of the parasitic phenomenon in the two periods, which can be explained essentially by the following facts:

the Alliance developed in part on the basis of the vestiges of the sects of the preceding period: it adopted their structure, tightly centralised around a "prophet", and their taste for clandestine organisation; by contrast, one of the bases for today's parasitism is the remnants of the student rebellion which weighed on the historic recovery of proletarian struggle at the end of the 1960s, and especially in 1968, along with all its baggage of individualism and calling into question organisation and centralisation, which supposedly "stifled individuals";

In support of the ICC's struggle against parasitism and opportunism

Visitors to our internet site will be aware that in the recent period the ICC has had to confront a slanderous and shameful campaign mounted by the so-called Internal Fraction of the ICC (IFICC) and the Argentine Círculo de Comunistas Internacionalistas. In fighting these attacks the ICC has drawn on the unique source of clarity and strength for any revolutionary organisation; it has placed itself squarely on the ground of the principles, history and traditions of the workers' movement.

We can only deplore the fact that the IBRP, which is also a part of the Communist Left, has not done so but has chosen to throw in its lot with the ICC's detractors and has embraced their sordid and cynical methods. This is a serious betrayal of all that it means to be a part of the proletarian political milieu. Moreover this is in a situation in which the other historic groups of the Communist Left stand by, indifferent to the threat from elements whose sole aim is the destruction of proletarian organisations and, with them, the hope of a classless society.

But although the other historic groups of the proletarian political milieu reveal their inability to defend the revolutionary organisation, there are nevertheless elements who are in contact with the ICC and with the Communist Left generally, who see the importance of this battle and want to take up arms themselves to defend the principles and the future of the revolutionary proletariat. They have written to the ICC to express their solidarity and support and/or they have sent us copies of the letters that they have written to the IBRP to protest at its anti-proletarian behaviour and to try and call it back from the brink.

These letters are grappling with questions that are vital for the unity of the working class and its politicised elements, for this reason we are publishing extracts from them to encourage reflection on the part of other visitors to our internet site. We make little comment on the content because the letters essentially speak for themselves.

The need to defend the proletarian political milieu

The starting point of these letters is a reflection on events that comes out of the experience of the writers, as elements in search of a framework that enables them to understand the world in which we are forced to live and to engage in a process to change it. They have found the reference point that they need in the Communist Left and they feel very keenly that the campaign mounted by the IFICC and the Argentine Circulo against the ICC is also aimed against them and against the whole working class. They are shocked and indignant at these attacks.

“Within the limits of our possibilities, we will not tolerate accusations of Stalinism against the ICC or against any proletarian group that has fought for decades against the most bloody counter-revolution in the history of Humanity.

We do not accept that such a slander is made gratuitously with no apparent proof, and even less when it comes from a shadowy group with a very dubious trajectory such as the IFICC.” (letter signed “a group of workers in the Basque country”).

Many of them want to bring their own experience to bear in defending the ICC from the false accusations made against it and defend our method in debate, as well as in dealing with organisational questions.

“The public meetings which we have visited, discussions sometimes held with you, concerning so many important questions of the international workers movement, have always been held in an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect. In particular, political divergences have always been discussed with a self-critical attitude of solidarity. New participants, who have hesitated to speak up, or those who have put forward controversial positions concerning given questions, have always been encouraged to fully participate in the discussions.

All of this reveals the accusations being raised against you at the website of the IBRP (International Bureau for the Revolutionary Party) through the Argentine ... “Circle of

International Communists, that you work and act in a “Stalinist” manner, to be pure denigration with the aim of discrediting a revolutionary organisation working in many countries of the world.

We have esteem for your open manner and welcome your steps to throw light in public on the orchestration of a campaign directed against you, and in the last instance against us too.” (statement adopted by participants at an ICC public meeting in Germany on the initiative of a sympathiser).

“I believe (the ICC) to be an honest organisation, that has made an inestimable contribution to clarification within the proletarian political milieu, of which it considers itself – and can be considered - to be a part.

It is a group that has always stimulated debate in a fraternal way, it has been respectful when disagreements have arisen and, a thing unknown previously, it has supplied publications of other organisations of the proletarian political milieu for reading.” (letter from AN, Spain).

“The ICC have attempted to classify a whole set of political behaviours under the definition of ‘political parasitism’. As one who has demonstrated many of these aberrant behaviours, I can testify that the ICC’s ‘Theses on Parasitism’ have been an irreplaceable political tool in understanding the roots and consequences of that behaviour. I can also testify that despite attacking the ICC (although to a far lesser extent than other parasites!) it has never shown the slightest hint of ‘Stalinism’ towards me. Instead, while not abdicating its right to defend itself, it did its level best to help me identify what I was doing and work towards overcoming it even if there is still a long way to go. This is not the behaviour of an organisation that ‘cannot tolerate disagreement’ or that is ‘paranoid’ or ‘delusional’.” (JB, Britain)

“The CCI has never withdrawn or censured the texts that have come into my hands. It must also be noted that, however painful it may have been, this organisation has had the courage to publicly bring to light the crisis. This means that it can be aired openly in discussion, so avoiding any temptation to resolve it behind closed doors with tricky machinations, a method that is alien to the proletariat.” (RQ, Spain)

“ When they have had internal problems they have brought them out into the open, brought them to the knowledge of all. It seems to us that this attitude does them honour as an authentic communist organisation. And if today there have been serious steps forward politically and theoretically, we owe it to these revolutionary militants who have resisted against all odds the attempts to denature the communist program from within as well as from the outside.

They have also tried to carry the debate into the international arena when there have been extremely serious conflicts, like the wars that assail the planet. But we all know (or at least those of us who have followed the situation) what has been the response of the

other groups in the face of such criminal events. The ICC called for united action against imperialist war, the reply has always been one of complete scorn on the part of those who also call themselves internationalists and are certain that they are the only party.” (Basque workers)

Two of the letters draw attention to the fact that the insidious manoeuvres of the Argentine “Círculo de Comunistas Internacionalista” and the IFICC have taken the NCI into its line of fire in a specific way. Behind their concern for the comrades of the NCI lies the realisation that this is a group - albeit on another continent - that is making the same painstaking effort at clarification as they, their preoccupation is a living expression of the international, unified character of the proletariat and its struggle.

“The ICC has been attacked and not only the ICC. All of us who claim the Communist Left as a political reference point have been attacked with manoeuvres that are by no means new but which are the criminal methods that the bourgeoisie uses to destroy new militants or proletarian groups. And we are sure of this because there is evidence that the IFICC has used the same means that it used to try and destroy the ICC from the inside; manoeuvres, intrigue etc., to attempt to destroy the comrades in Argentina. That is, they have tried to generate all kinds of doubts and suspicions to create discord between these comrades and the ICC.” (Basque workers)

“I express my solidarity with the comrades of the NCI in Argentina who, in spite of what has happened, have taken a position on the crisis by means of several written statements, that are completely valid, the 27/10/04 declaration and one of 7/11/04.” (RQ, Spain)

Principled action at the heart of the defence of the proletarian political milieu

“The life within communist organisations has to reflect what the future communist society will be like” (letter of AN, Spain).

The sympathisers are grappling with an issue that is of immense importance for the whole proletariat; principled action and correctness are a condition for ensuring the trust, solidarity and proletarian dignity of the working class. That is, these aspects are part of the nature of a class that has every interest in destroying the divisions imposed on it and no reason whatever to do down class brothers in order to advance personal or sectoral interests. On the contrary, it can achieve its final goal only by realising its international class unity. Moreover its political organisations can do no other than express the nature of the class that generates them.

In his letter, JB (Britain) takes up this issue within the context of the difficulties in forging a revolutionary organisation:

“The construction of the communist organisation is a project fraught with difficulty and contradiction - it can only exist as an alien body within bourgeois society and is consequently under permanent attack at every level of its existence.

To combat this continual onslaught from the ‘antibodies’ of the bourgeois order, revolutionaries must adopt the most rigorous collective understanding of how a communist organisation should function. This is why all organisations adopt rules of functioning and a precise organisational methodology to deal with the inevitable debates and disagreements that arise within organisations.

Without these structures and principles, revolutionary organisations do not exist. There is no shame in revolutionaries disagreeing with each other. Nor is there shame for militants, even groups of militants, to leave an organisation where they no longer accept its platform or positions:

But there is great shame in:

- *Hijacking the internal apparatus of an organisation to further personal goals;*
- *Spreading lies and defamation about individual comrades in secret in an effort to destroy them;*
- *Refusing to follow the most basic elements of communist solidarity required of militants (i.e paying dues);*
- *Stealing both funds and materials from the organisation to advance the interests of a particular clique and not the organisation or workers movement as a whole;*
- *Making a constant stream of the vilest defamations against another organisation the centrepiece of your political existence;*
- *Stealing contact addresses and using them in the most irresponsible manner - comrades who give their personal details to a revolutionary organisation are placing a great deal of trust and solidarity in that organisation and the behaviour of the IFICC in this regard is a heinous betrayal of that trust;*
- *Making public the dates of internal meetings of a proletarian organisation, thus putting that organisation at risk of intervention by bourgeois security forces;*
- *Making an effort to turn the national sections of an organisation against each other through flattery and lies;*
- *Putting the personal safety of militants at risk by attempting to identify their individual contributions to the revolutionary press.”*

The responsibility of the historic groups of the Communist Left

Just as the contacts are aware that the framework and principles of the workers’ movement are the key to their own search for clarity and coherence, they are also aware of the responsibility that resides in those organisations who come from the Communist Left tradition. That is, the historic weight of those groups whose role is to safeguard and disseminate the historic programme and principles secreted by the working class. Their letters to the IBRP are highly critical of the latter’s attitude in relation to the attack of the Circulo and the IFICC against the ICC.

"Over the last few months, a slander campaign has been mounted against the ICC by the IFICC and the Circulo. Unfortunately the attitude of the IBRP towards the ICC in this affair is absolutely scandalous. This attitude is incompatible with everything that the proletarian class represents.

To start with, the IBRP has put the 'declaration of the Circulo' on its Internet site without consulting the ICC.

In addition, the IBRP has deliberately lied about the theft of the address list of the ICC subscribers and it used these addresses for its own interests. How come the invitations of the IBRP were sent to ICC subscribers, who had given their addresses only to the ICC?

On the first point: we wonder how an organisation (the IBRP) whose basis is the tradition of the communist left and proletarian principles, who has known the ICC for years and considers the ICC to be a proletarian organisation, can immediately take the side of the Circulo without even contacting the ICC. From the point of view of communist principles, the IBRP should first have contacted the ICC to ask their point of view on the accusations (...).

On the second point, how can a communist organisation, which is based on principles such as confidence, honesty, solidarity, defend this theft and hide the truth from its own militants?

While the IBRP tries to shut up the ICC by saying that 'while so much is going on in the world, the ICC has nothing better to do than write 'position statements' on its disputes', it is fully engaged regrouping with the parasites. This is pure opportunism.

What the IBRP has done in relation to the two points mentioned above and in relation to the other slanders against the ICC, is solely in the interests of the bourgeoisie and against the interests of the international proletariat." (two sympathisers in Amsterdam)

"We condemn in the sharpest possible terms that you have put your website at the disposal of such campaigns of filth, and that you have, without any commentary, examination or verification, allowed that the ICC be insulted by the Argentine circle "Circulo de Comunistas Internationalistas") as a Stalinist organisation employing nauseating methods.

We consider it to be politically perfectly right and highly responsible that the ICC excludes members from the organisation and from meetings, who are guilty of stealing subscription address lists, and who, with the most revolting bourgeois methods, without any proofs, have accused a leading member of the organisation of being a 'cop'." (Participants at an ICC meeting in Germany)

A comrade from France reminds the IBRP that unity within the proletarian camp and fraternal debate is indispensable for revolutionaries:

*“Scattered and weak as they are, the few revolutionary organisations who exist today must polemicise, discuss systematically historic questions, as well as current affairs, of course. And, it seems to me that the contributions (regular, argued, lucid) of the ICC over the last 30 years are far from the ‘methodological and political void’ that you denounce. Of course, the debate for clarity must be lively, uncompromising but it must, I think, remain fraternal between organisations of the Communist Left. Because if, as you say, there is so much ‘work to be done to try and understand what is happening in the world’, there is also **so much to be done in order to ACT together (and what strength that would bring), to distribute TOGETHER, organise COMMON meetings on essential questions, on what unites us:** internationalism, the struggle against war. ... Because ‘the experience of the past shows that a fraternal bond must exist between the workers of different countries that encourages them to hold fast, shoulder to shoulder, (...) and that if this bond is scorned, the punishment will be the general failure of these dispersed attempts.’ (Marx, Inaugural Address, p.467 Pléiade)”*

A letter addressed to the IBRP by “two young sympathisers of the communist left” also takes up the need for fraternal relations between proletarian organisations. Moreover it points out that the IBRP’s support for the Argentine Circulo and the IFICC against the ICC tarnishes its image as a communist organisation in the eyes of those who, like themselves, look to the tradition of the Communist Left for guidance:

“... we are open to all the revolutionary communist organisations and are very much in favour of discussion between these groups, discussion which is very important for our political clarification. This is a necessary and indispensable path for the development of consciousness and the unification of the proletarian camp on the basis of solid agreement. (...)

*... we note that on your internet site, supported by the IFICC, you have published a text of the *Círculo de Comunistas Internacionalistas* of Argentina, which accuses the ICC of systematically refusing any discussion with groups who have opinions different from their own. We can assume that you agree with this accusation as you publish it. Such an accusation, made without appropriate argumentation and without any valid explanation, seems rather unreal to us in view of the ICC’s efforts to further discussion and furnish clarification (...).*

Your accusation is all the more false given that, to our knowledge, the ICC has often made reference to the proletarian political milieu (...) and has mentioned you as one of its component parts, asking you many times to intervene together with it against imperialist wars. Moreover, on your attitude, in particular at the public meeting in Berlin on 15/05/04 on the causes of imperialist war, (...) in the conclusion to the discussion, the spokesperson for the IBRP defended the position that the discussion showed that debate between the IBRP and the ICC is ‘useless’. (...)

So we find that your attitude deviates appreciably from the image that we have of a revolutionary communist organisation, which must perforce disappoint us and we want to point this out to you in this letter.

Moreover, isn't solidarity between communist organisations the engine of the combat which unites us? Hoping that our criticisms will not be taken as animated by ill intentions towards the IBRP but on the contrary will help to encourage a better analysis of an important problem which certainly has not been the object of a profound reflection".

The group of workers from the Basque country also criticises the IBRP's refusal of the debate:

"There is a sentence that they have written which shows up all the weakness of the BIPR, "We are fed up with discussing with the ICC".

In the first place our predecessors were never tired of discussing, on the contrary, it was a duty to search for the greatest possible clarity. That taste for theory has been lost and we must rediscover it. But the IBRP does not want open debate between everyone, it only wants adhesion to its positions without any discussion or questioning. An attitude typical of leftism, you like it or you lump it. A great deal must be done and discussion undertaken to form the future working class party; it will not be the ICC and the IBRP alone who will be involved in this task but many proletarian groups that will arise, at least we hope so.

By avoiding the debate, the IBRP shows clearly its theoretical weakness, as it does when, in uncontrolled anger, it tells us 'we don't have to account to the ICC or anyone else for our political actions'. Here we find the 'divine right' of the LEADER, who has the right to do whatever he likes, because the leaders are above GOOD and BAD. In brief, the reference point for morality and ethics is to be found in the complete works of the JESUITS."

The opportunism of the IBRP

Many of the letters sent to the IBRP condemn its opportunism as unworthy of a proletarian organisation. That is, they stigmatise a policy characterised by a desertion of principles in favour of using means that are alien to the proletariat in order to 'get ahead' in what it seems to conceive as a race to win the hearts and minds of the new generation. The contacts are also aware how very self-destructive is the Bureau's political promiscuity with the IFICC and the Circulo. These gentlemen aim not only at the destruction of the ICC through sordid manoeuvres, but also at the political annihilation of the IBRP, though in its case through blandishments and siren songs.

As GW from Britain tells the IBRP: "... the creation of the IBRP from the CWO and BC was strongly marked by an anti-ICCism as well as an opportunist leap. I now believe however that recent developments show a qualitative descent in the activity of the IBRP that threatens its very existence as a revolutionary force. It is now apparent what has been implicit for some time: the IBRP sees itself, not as comrades of, but in competition

with the ICC. This shopkeeper, basically bourgeois attitude, can, if not dramatically reversed, only spell the doom of the IBRP as an expression of the proletariat.” (...) This is the very opposite of working class solidarity, of confidence in the working class and recent events confirm that you understand and share very little of these fundamental and essential attributes of a revolutionary class. (...) Linking up with and publicising any anti-ICC Tom, Dick or Harry shows a shameless and fundamental betrayal of the tenets of the workers’ movement on your part. You blatantly excuse theft from revolutionary organisation because it’s done in the name of "leadership rights". You could say it is done in the cut and thrust of business and doing down a rival. At least that would be more honest..."

The group of workers from the Basque country also tells the IBRP in no uncertain terms that their methods are against all that the working class stands for and are not to be tolerated:

"NO GENTLEMEN OF THE IBRP, for our class not everything is acceptable. Our proletarian morality is the antithesis of bourgeois morality; everyone must account for himself. That includes you and is even more applicable in your case as you came out in defence of the IFICC and its Mafia methods, or are you perhaps trying to get us to believe the letter and the horrendous things recounted in it?

You published the letter on the Internet to give it the widest possible audience, you owe something to those who have read it. We do not accept that you justify the theft of something as important as the address list and the money of a proletarian organisation. We are appalled at such vulgar arguments as that the perpetrators were the leaders or the old guard. What do you say they want to do? Redirect the ICC towards the right path? That does not mean that they have the right to thieve.

YES GENTLEMEN OF THE IBRP, you do have to give an account and not only to the ICC but also to all of us. What is your morality, what code of conduct and behaviour do you hold to? Are you part of the working class? On this question too there are class lines."

The contacts are appalled that an organisation of the Communist Left should excuse the theft on the part of the IFICC of the ICC’s list of contact addresses. They are outraged that they go onto defend it on the grounds that the elements who went on to form the IFICC were supposedly ‘leaders’ of our organisation (see *"Reply to the stupid accusations of an organisation in the process of degenerating"*, on the Internet site of the IBRP). The "two young sympathisers of the CL" ask the IBRP, “do you really think that the ‘leaders’ of a communist organisation have more rights and power than the militants that compose it, specifically in this case the exclusive ownership of common documents?”

A very pertinent question. We hope that the Bureau will deign to answer it because, contrary to their assertion that *"we don't have to account to the ICC or anyone else for our political actions"*, those elements who look to the Left Communist movement for political leadership have every right, nay, a duty even, to demand that revolutionary

organisations account for their actions. Equally, these organisations themselves have a responsibility to motivate their political choices before the entire working class that has generated them.

The "group of Basque workers" too has something to say on this point:

*"The terms used by the IBRP, such as 'the old guard, the leaders', generates a **profound DISGUST** in us because it reflects a conception of the party that is typically bourgeois. It is not by chance that the 'leaders' unite to manipulate at will all the honest militants who approach the communist left. The best example of this is what has happened in Argentina and it is unforgivable that such an attitude is tolerated and not denounced to the four corners of the earth. Someone who tries to destroy a proletarian group deserves our scorn, not our respect."*

A comrade in Sweden refers to the IBRP's view that the theft of the address list was not theft on the basis that these "leaders" of the ICC wanted to guide ICC militants back to the right path:

*"The logic to defend theft is worse than theft itself. IBRP put forward a religious or leftist position on the **leading role of the party**. Militant within the ICC are not religious idolizers which can be led to the right path and they are neither foot soldiers that can be guided by a commander. My opinion is that militants within the communist left (not only within the ICC) contrary to the left of capital are able, knowledgeable and analytical, in short real revolutionaries".*

As another comrade writing from America asks, "At what point does opportunism cross over the class line? Adopting bourgeois tactics is a first step in the direction of adopting bourgeois ideology, no?" (IO).

Appeal made by the contacts to the IBRP

As GW says, "recent developments show a qualitative descent in the activity of the IBRP that threatens its very existence as a revolutionary force". Aware of the dangerous waters within which the IBRP is floundering, the concern of the sympathisers is to pull it back from the abyss that it seems determined to leap into at the kind invitation of the IFICC.

The two comrades in Amsterdam say, "We condemn this opportunist attitude of the IBRP towards the ICC. We hope that in the interest of the class struggle and proletarian unity, the IBRP will make a self-criticism of its attitude in this affair."

The statement of the participants of the ICC meeting in Germany reads:

"We call on you to return to the terrain of the proletarian form and principles of confrontation, meaning:

- *the immediate publication, in your press and your website, of our letter and of the communiqué of the ICC on these developments,*
- *the establishment, with your participation, of an independent commission of the camp of the Communist Left, to examine and clarify the accusations against the ICC.*
- *the rupture of any collaboration with the former ICC elements, who have grouped themselves in and around the IFICC (the so-called "internal fraction of the ICC").*
- *denouncing and publically combating the methods of theft of money and contact addresses, and the hate campaigns against the ICC.*

You should at long last assume the collective responsibility you have towards the international proletariat. Sit down at the table with the ICC and other revolutionaries and debate publically the central questions of the workers movement, of capitalism and its overthrow."

JB, Britain declares:

"The question of parasitism is one that involves the entire communist left. I support the ICC's call for other proletarian organisations and their contacts and sympathisers to take position on the ICC's theses on the subject to:

- *explain whether or not they believe the behavioural patterns of 'parasitism' identified by the ICC exist or not and to show why they believe this;*
- *provide alternative explanations for this behaviour if they disagree with the ICC's explanation for its existence.*

In short, to develop the discussion in the widest and most rigorous possible way, as is incumbent on the workers' movement as a whole."

RQ, Spain underlines the general responsibility of the political elements of the proletarian camp:

*"The proletarian political milieu must carry out its responsibilities. The evolution of the situation: the IBRP going into crisis by insisting that it maintains, and will continue to maintain, its collaboration with the FICCI; the last minute intervention of the murky *Círculo de Comunistas Internacionalistas* in Argentina and the silence of the other organisations, that should have taken position against the behaviour of the elements of the IFICC, because no proletarian organisation alive is safe from them. This makes me think that a sort of plot against a revolutionary organisation such as the ICC has been organised, with some who participate actively and others by default."*

The importance of solidarity

IO from America asks us: *"I do have to wonder why you pay so much attention to the IFICC (...)I guess talking about them is useful perhaps as a lesson of parasitism in action, otherwise shouldn't they be ignored for the most part?"* If we have spent so much time and effort in our public struggle against the unholy alliance of parasitism and

opportunism represented by the IFICC and the IBRP, this is because – however small the numbers involved – we are fighting to defend the very principles of proletarian action and organisation whereon the world wide party of the working class must one day be based. We are firmly convinced that if we do not defend these principles now, then we would both be failing in our duty, and compromising the future development of all revolutionary organisation.

The passion and conviction with which our contacts have entered into the fray in defence of proletarian principles is enough to warm the cockles of any revolutionary's heart. It shows that the ICC's insistence that principled behaviour is a political necessity isn't a voice lost in the wilderness of expediency, cynicism, and opportunism. This simple act of solidarity is all the more important as the ICC has recently received threats, for example, from the UHP-Arde, as well as others sent anonymously.

Aware of the gravity of recent events, RQ (Spain) initially saw them as a backward step for the working class. After further reflection however, he/she says: *"I don't think that the ICC and the proletariat are confronting a reflux but that, on the contrary, this is a forward step at the level of method because of what has had to be confronted. As was the case in the First International in the fight against the Bakuninists, the Marxist method, and therefore that of revolutionary organisations, lies in bringing out into the open before the militants and the whole proletariat, the problem or the crisis in all of its difficulty. It means discussing it through and going to the root without holding back."*

This, like the other letters, shows the unconquerable determination to understand and advance, however hard the battle may prove, that is the hallmark of the proletariat as a revolutionary class. The sympathisers recognise that the fight for communism is so much deeper and all-embracing than the search for a list of correct positions. The Marxist method means a questioning of every aspect of this rotten society and only it can breathe life into the reflections, the questionings, and the hunt for the unclouded truth. This is the gauntlet that the writers of these letters have taken up.

We leave the last word with the participants at the ICC Public Forum in Germany, a sentiment that encapsulates the priceless solidarity that our sympathisers have proffered:

"Don't give up, we support your struggle!"

In an internet article entitled "la ciencia y arte del zoquete" the UHP accuse the ICC of defending the policies of the bourgeoisie, call us imbeciles and then conclude with the words *"Against the bourgeois campaigns to falsify and repress our struggle and death to the imbeciles"*.

Workers' Movement: Marxism against Freemasonry

With the following article on the struggle of Marxism against Freemasonry, the ICC is firmly placing itself in the best traditions of Marxism and the workers' movement. As opposed to anarchist political indifferentism, Marxist has always insisted that the proletariat, in order to fulfil its revolutionary mission, must understand all the essential aspects of the functioning of its class enemy. As exploiting classes, these enemies of the proletariat necessarily employ secrecy and deception both against each other and against the working class. This is why Marx and Engels, in a series of important writings, exposed to the working class the secret structures and activities of the ruling classes.

In his **Revelations of the diplomatic history of the 18th century**, based on an exhaustive study of diplomatic manuscripts in the British Museum, Marx exposed the secret collaboration of the British and Russian cabinets since the time of Peter the Great. In his writings against Lord Palmerston, Marx revealed that the continuation of this secret alliance was directed essentially against revolutionary movements throughout Europe. In fact, during the first sixty years of the 19th century, Russian diplomacy, the bastion of counter-revolution at that time, was involved in "*all the conspiracies and uprisings*" of the day, including the insurrectional secret societies such as the Carbonari, trying to manipulate them to its own ends (Engels: **The Foreign Policy of Czarist Russia**).

In his pamphlet against **Herr Vogt** Marx laid bare the way in which Bismarck, Palmerston and the Czar supported the agents of Bonapartism under Louis Napoleon in France in infiltrating and denigrating the workers' movement. The outstanding moments of the combat of the workers' movement against these hidden manoeuvres were the struggle of the Marxists against Bakunin in the First International, and of the "Eisenachers" against the Bismarck's use of Lassalleism in Germany.

Combating the bourgeoisie's fascination for the hidden and mysterious, Marx and Engels showed that the proletariat is the enemy of every kind of policy of secrecy and mystification. As opposed to the British Tory Urquhart, whose Struggle over 50 years against Russia's secret policies degenerated into a "*secret esoteric doctrine*" of an "almighty" Russian diplomacy as the "*only active factor in modern history*" (Engels), the work of the founders of Marxism on this question was always based on a scientific, historical materialist approach. This method revealed the hidden "Jesuitic order" of Russian and western diplomacy and the secret societies of the exploiting classes as the product of the absolutism and enlightenment of the 18th century, during which the crown imposed a collaboration between the declining nobility and the rising bourgeoisie. This "*aristocratic-bourgeois International of Enlightenment*" referred to by Engels in articles on Czarist foreign policy, also provided the social basis for freemasonry, which arose in

Britain, the classical country of compromise between aristocracy and bourgeoisie. Whereas the bourgeois aspect of freemasonry attracted many bourgeois revolutionaries in the 18th and early 19th century, especially in France and the United States, its profoundly reactionary character was soon to make it a weapon above all against the working class. This was the case after the rise of the working class socialist movement, prompting the bourgeoisie to abandon the materialistic atheism of its own revolutionary youth. In the second half of the 19th century, European freemasonry, which until then had been above all an amusement of a bored aristocracy which had lost its social function, increasingly became a bastion of the new anti-materialistic "religiosity" of the bourgeoisie, directed essentially against the workers' movement. Within this masonic movement, there developed a whole series of anti-Marxist ideologies, which were later to become the common property of 20th century counter-revolutionary movements. According to one of these ideologies, Marxism itself was a creation of the "illuminati" wing of German freemasonry, against which the "true" freemasons had to mobilise. Bakunin, himself an active freemason, was one of the fathers of another of these allegations, that Marxism was a Jewish conspiracy: *"This whole Jewish world, comprising a single exploiting sect, a kind of blood sucking people, a kind of organic destructive collective parasite, going beyond not only the frontiers of states but of political opinion, this world is now, at least for the most part, at the disposal of Marx on the one hand, and of Rothchild on the other. (...) This may seem strange. What can there be in common between socialism and a leading bank? The point is that authoritarian socialism, Marxist communism, demands a strong centralisation of the state. And where there is centralisation of the state, there must necessarily be a central bank, and where such a bank exists, the parasitic Jewish nation, speculating with the Labour of the people, will be found."* (Bakunin, quoted by R. Huch : **Bakunin und die Anarchie**).

As opposed to the vigilance of the First, Second and Third Internationals on these questions, a large part of today's revolutionary milieu is content to ignore this danger, or to jeer at the ICC's alleged "Machiavellian" view of history. This underestimation, connected to an obvious ignorance of an important part of the history of the workers movement, is the result of 50 years of counter-revolution, interrupting the passing on of Marxist organisational experience from one generation to the next.

This weakness is all the more dangerous, since the employment in this century of mystical sects and ideologies has reached dimensions going far beyond the simple question of freemasonry posed in the ascendant phase of capitalism. Thus, the majority of anti-communist secret societies which were created between 1918-1923 against the German revolution, did not originate in freemasonry at all, but were set up directly by the army, under the control of demobilised officers. As direct instruments of the capitalist state against the communist revolution, they were disbanded as soon as the proletariat had been defeated. Equally, since the end of the counter-revolution in the late 1960s, classical freemasonry has been only one aspect of a whole apparatus of religious, esoteric and racist sects and ideologies developed by the state against the proletariat. Today, in the framework of capitalist decomposition, such anti-Marxist sects and ideologies, declaring war on materialism and the concept of progress in history and

with a considerable influence in the industrial countries, constitute an additional weapon of the bourgeoisie against the working class.

The First International against secret societies

Already the First International was the target of furious attacks mounted by occultism. The supporters of the Carbonari's Catholic mysticism and of Mazzinism were the declared opponents of the International. In New York, the occultist supporters of Virginia Woodhull tried to introduce feminism, "free love" and "para-psychological experiments" into the International's American sections. In Britain and France, left wing masonic lodges, supported by Bonapartist agents, organised a series of provocations aimed at discrediting the International and justifying the arrest of its members, obliging the General Council to exclude and publicly denounce Pyat and his supporters. Most dangerous of all was Bakunin's Alliance, a secret organisation within the International, which with its different levels of "initiation" of members into its "secrets" and its methods of manipulation (Bakunin's "revolutionary catechism") exactly copied the example of freemasonry (see **International Reviews** nos. 84 and 85 for the struggle against Bakuninism in the First International).

Marx and Engel's enormous personal commitment in repelling these attacks, in uncovering Pyat and his Bonapartist supporters, combatting Mazzini, excluding Woodhull's American sections, and above all in revealing the plot by Bakunin's Alliance against the International, are well known. Their full awareness of the occultist menace is documented by the resolution proposed by Marx himself, and adopted by the General Council, on the necessity to combat the secret societies.

At the London Conference of the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) , September 1871, Marx insisted that "this kind of organisation stands in contradiction to the development of the proletarian movement, since these societies, instead of educating the workers, submit them to authoritarian and mystical laws, which hinder their independence and direct their consciousness in a wrong direction" (Marx-Engels **Werke** Vol. 17, p655).

The bourgeoisie also tried to discredit the proletariat through media allegations that both the International and the Paris Commune were "organised" by a secret Freemason-type leadership. In an interview with the newspaper **The New York World** which suggested that the workers were the instruments of a "conclave" of "daring conspirators" present inside the Paris Commune, Marx declared: "*Dear sir, there is no secret to be cleared up (...) unless it's the secret of the human stupidity of those who stubbornly ignore the fact that our Association acts in public, and that extensive reports on its activities are published for all who want to read them*". The Paris Commune, according to *The World's* logic, "*could equally have been a conspiracy of the freemasons, since their individual share was not small. I would really not be amazed if the Pope were to put the whole insurrection down to them. But let us look for another explanation. The insurrection in Paris was made by the Paris workers*" (**MEW** Vol. 17, S.639-370).

The fight against mysticism in the Second International

With the defeat of the Paris Commune and the death of the International, Marx and Engels supported the fight to shake off the grip of freemasonry over workers' organisations in countries like Italy, Spain or the USA (eg the Knights of Labour). The Second International, founded in 1889, was at first less vulnerable to occultist infiltration than its predecessor, since it excluded the anarchists. The "very scope" of the programme of the First International had allowed "*the declassed elements to worm their way in and establish, at its very heart, secret organisations whose efforts, instead of being directed against the bourgeoisie and the existing governments, would be directed against the International itself*" (**Report to the Hague Congress on the Alliance**, 1872).

Since the Second International was less open at this level, the esoteric attack began, not with an organisational infiltration, but with an ideological attack against marxism. By the end of the 19th century, German and Austrian freemasonry boasted about its successes in freeing the universities and scientific circles from the "plague of materialism". With the development of reformist illusions and opportunism in the workers' movement at the turn of the century, it was from these central European scientists that Bernsteinism adopted the "discovery" of the "superseding of marxism" by idealism and neo-Kantian agnosticism. In the context of the defeat of the revolutionary proletarian movement in Russia after 1905, the disease of "god building" even penetrated the ranks of Bolshevism, where however it was quickly crushed. Within the International as a whole, the marxist left mounted a heroic and brilliant defence of scientific socialism, without however being able to halt the advance of idealism, so that freemasonry now began to win supporters within the workers' parties. Jaures, the famous French workers' leader, openly defended the ideology of freemasonry against what he termed the "*impoverished economic and narrow materialistic interpretation of human thought*" of Franz Mehring. At the same time, the development of anarcho-syndicalism in reaction to reformism opened a new field for the spread of reactionary often mystical ideas on the basis of philosophers like Bergson, Nietzsche (who described himself as the "philosopher of aestheticism") or Sorel. This in turn affected semi-anarchist elements within the International like Herve in France or Mussolini in Italy, who went over to extreme right wing bourgeois organisations at the outbreak of World War I. The marxists, attempting in vain to impose a struggle against freemasonry in the French party, or to forbid party members in Germany having a "second loyalty" to other organisations, were in the period before 1914 not strong enough to impose organisational measures as Marx and Engels had done.

The Third International against Freemasonry

Determined to overcome the organisational weaknesses of the Second International which facilitated its collapse in 1914, the Comintern fought for the complete elimination of "esoteric" elements within its ranks.

In 1922, in response to the French Communist Party's infiltration by elements belonging to freemasonry, who had gangrened the party since its foundation at the Tours Congress, the 4th Congress of the Communist International, in its "Resolution on the French question", reaffirmed class principles in the following terms:

"The incompatibility between freemasonry and socialism was considered to be evident in most of the parties of the Second International (...) If the Second Congress of the Communist International, in its conditions for joining the International, did not formulate a special point on the incompatibility between communism and freemasonry, it was because this principle found its place in a separate resolution unanimously voted by the Congress."

The fact, unexpectedly revealed at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, that a considerable number of French communists belong to masonic lodges is, in the eyes of the Communist International, the most clear and at the same time the most pitiful proof that our French Party has conserved not only the psychological heritage of the epoch of reformism, of parliamentarism and patriotism, but also liaisons that are very concrete, very compromising for the leadership of the party, with the secret, political and careerist organisations of the radical bourgeoisie ...

The International considers that it is indispensable to put an end, once and for all, to these compromising and demoralising liaisons between the leadership of the Communist Party and the political organisations of the bourgeoisie. The honour of the proletariat of France demands that it purifies all its organisations of elements who want to belong to both camps in the class struggle.

"The Congress charges the Central Committee of the French Communist Party to liquidate, before 1st January 1923, all liaisons between the Party, in the person of certain of its members and groups, and freemasonry. Those who, before 1st January, have not declared openly to their organisation and in public through the Party press, their complete break with freemasonry, will be automatically excluded from the Communist Party without any right to join it again at any time. Anyone who hides their membership of freemasonry will be considered to be an agent of the enemy who has penetrated the party and the individual in question will be treated with ignominy before the proletariat".

In the name of the International, Trotsky denounced the existence of links between *"freemasonry and the institutions of the party, the publications commission of the paper, the Central Committee, the Federal Committee"* in France. *"The League of Human Rights and freemasonry are machines of the bourgeoisie which divert the consciousness of the representatives of the French proletariat. We declare pitiless war on these methods, since they constitute a secret and insidious weapon of the bourgeois arsenal (...) We must free the party of these elements"* (**La Voix de L'Internationale**: "Le Mouvement Communiste en France").

Similarly, the KPD's delegate at the 3rd Congress of the Italian CP in Rome, referring to the Theses on Communist Tactics submitted by Bordiga and Terracini, could report: *"The evident irreconcilability of belonging at the same time to the communist party and to another party, applies, not only to political parties but also to those movements which, despite their political character, do not have the name and the organisation of a party (...) here in particular freemasonry"* ("Die Italienische Thesen", by Paul Bötcher in **Die Internationale** 1922.)

Capitalism's entry into its decadent phase since World War I has led to a gigantic development of state capitalism, in particular of the military and repressive apparatus (espionage, secret police etc). Does this mean the bourgeois need for its "traditional" secret societies disappears? This is partly the case. Where decadent state capitalist totalitarianism has taken a brutal, undisguised form as in Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, or Stalin's Russia, masonic and other "lodges" or secret groupings were always forbidden.

However, even these brutally open forms of state capitalism cannot completely dispense with a secret or illegal, officially non-existent apparatus. State capitalist totalitarianism implies the dictatorial control of the bourgeois state, not only over the entire economy, but over every aspect of life. Thus, in Stalinist regimes the "mafia" is an indispensable part of the state, since it controls the only part of the distribution apparatus which really works, but which officially is not supposed to exist: the black market. In western countries, organised criminality is a no less indispensable part of the state capitalist regime.

But under the so-called "democratic" form of state capitalism, the unofficial as well as the official repression and infiltration apparatus expands tremendously.

Under this dictatorial fake democracy, the state imposes its politics on the members of its own class, and combats the organisations of its imperialist rivals and of its proletarian class enemy in a no less totalitarian manner than under the Nazis or Stalinists. Its official political police and spy apparatus is just as omnipresent as that of any other state. But since the ideology of democracy does not allow this apparatus to proceed as openly as the Gestapo or the GPU in Russia, the western bourgeoisie redevelops its old traditions of freemasonry and the "polit-mafia", but this time under the direct control of the state. The western bourgeoisie with whatever it cannot do legally and openly, illegally and in secret.

Thus, when the US army invaded Mussolini's Italy in 1943, they did not bring back with them the mafia alone.

"In the wake of the motorised American divisions pushing north, masonic lodges appeared out of the ground like mushrooms after rain. This was not only the result of the fact that Mussolini banned them and persecuted their members. The mighty American masonic

groupings had their share in this development, immediately taking their Italian brothers under their wing"[1].

Here lies the origin of one of the most famous of the many illegal organisations of the western, American led imperialist bloc, the "Propaganda 2" Lodge in Italy. These unofficial structures coordinated the struggle of the different national bourgeoisies of the American block against the influence of the rival Soviet bloc. The membership of such lodges includes leaders of the "left wing" of the capitalist state: stalinist and leftist parties, trade unions.

Through a series of scandals and revelations (linked to the break-up of the western block after 1989) we know quite a lot about the workings of such groupings against the imperialist enemy. But a much more carefully kept secret of the bourgeoisie is the fact that in decadence, its old tradition of masonic infiltration of workers organisations has also become part of the repertoire of the democratic totalitarian state apparatus. This has been the case whenever the proletariat has seriously menaced the bourgeoisie: above all during the revolutionary wave 1917-23, but also since 1968 with the resurgence of workers' struggles.

An illegal counter revolutionary apparatus

As Lenin pointed out, the proletarian revolution in Western Europe at the end of World War I was confronted with a much more powerful and intelligent ruling class than in Russia. As in Russia, the western bourgeoisie, in face of the revolution, immediately played the democratic card, bringing left wing, former workers' parties to power, announcing elections and plans for "industrial democracy" and for "integrating" the workers' councils into constitution and state.

But unlike Russia after February 1917, the western bourgeoisie immediately began to construct a gigantic, illegal counter-revolutionary apparatus.

To this end they made use of the political and organisational experience of the masonic lodges and right wing volkish orders which had specialised in combatting the socialist movement before the World War, completing their integration into the state. One such pre-war organisation was the "Germanic Order" and the "Hammer League" founded in 1912 in response to the looming war and to the electoral victory of the Socialist Party, declaring in its paper its goal of "*organising the counter-revolution*". "*The holy vendetta shall liquidate the revolutionary leaders at the very beginning of the insurrection, not hesitating to strike the mass criminals with their own weapons*"[2].

Victor Serge refers to the intelligence services of Action Francaise and of the *Cahiers de l'Antifrance* which spied on the vanguard movements in France already during the war; the espionage and provocateur service of the Fascist party in Italy; and the private detective agencies in the USA who "*provide the capitalists with discreet informers, expert*

provocateurs, riflemen, guards, foremen and also totally corrupt trade union militants", "supposedly employing 135,000 people".

"In Germany, since the official disarming of the country, the essential forces of reaction have been concentrated in extremely secretive organisations. The reaction has understood that, even in parties supported by the State, clandestinity is a precious asset. Naturally all these organisations take on the functions of virtual undercover police forces against the proletariat"[3].

In order to preserve the myth of democracy, the counter-revolutionary organisations in Germany and other countries were officially not part of the state, were financed privately, often declared illegal, and presented themselves as the enemies of democracy. With their assassinations of "democratic" bourgeois leaders like Rathenau and Erzberger, and their right-wing *putsches* (Kapp *Putsch* 1920, Hitler *Putsch* 1923) they played a vital role in luring the proletariat towards the terrain of defence of the counter-revolutionary Weimar "democracy".

The network against the proletarian revolution

It is in Germany, the main centre of the revolutionary wave 1917-23 outside of Russia, that we can best grasp the vast scale of counter-revolutionary operations, once the bourgeoisie feels its class rule threatened. A gigantic network was set up in defence of the bourgeois state. This network employed provocation, infiltration and political murder in order to supplement the counter-revolutionary policies of the SPD and the trade unions, as well as the Reichswehr and the privately financed unofficial "white army" of the **Freikorps**.

Even more famous is of course the NSDAP, founded in Munich against the revolution in 1919 as the "German Workers' Party". Hitler, Goering, Rohm and other Nazi leaders began their political careers as informers and agents against the Bavarian Workers' Council.

These illegal coordinating centres of the counter-revolution were in reality part of the state. Whenever their assassination specialists, such as the murderers of Liebknecht, Luxemburg, and hundreds of other Communist leaders, were put on trial, they were found not guilty, given token sentences, or allowed to escape[4]. Whenever their secret arms caches were discovered by the police, the army intervened to claim back these weapons, which had allegedly been stolen.

In the aftermath of the Kapp putsch the Organisation Escherich ("Orgesch") was the biggest and most dangerous anti-proletarian illegal organisation, and had the declared aim of "*liquidating Bolshevism*". It "*had over a million armed members, possessing countless secret arms depots, and working with secret service methods. To this end of [liquidating Bolshevism] the Orgesch maintained a spy agency.*"[5]

The "Teno", allegedly a technical service in case of public catastrophes, was in reality an armed troop, 170,000 strong, mainly used as strike breakers.

The Anti-Bolshevik League, founded on 1st December 1918 by industrialists, aimed its propaganda mainly at workers. "It followed the development of the KPD [German Communist Party] very closely and tried to infiltrate it with its informers. It was above all to this end that it maintained an intelligence and spy network camouflaged as a 4th department. It had links to the political police and to army units"[6].

In Munich, the occult Thule Society, linked to the above mentioned pre-war Germanic Order, set up the White Army of the Bavarian bourgeoisie, the **Freikorps Oberland**, and coordinated the struggle against the 1919 council republic, including the murder of the USPD leader Eisner, in order to provoke a premature insurrection. "Its second department was its intelligence service, which organised an extensive activity of infiltration, espionage and sabotage. According to Sebottendorff every member of the combat league soon had a membership card of the Spartakus Group under a different name. The spies of the combat league also sat in the committees of the council government and the Red Army and reported every evening to the centre of the Thule Society about the planning of the enemy"[7].

The main weapon of the bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution is not repression and subversion, but the presence of the ideology and the organisational influence of lie "left" organs of the bourgeoisie within the ranks of the proletariat. This was essentially the job of social democracy and the trade unions. But the importance of the assistance which infiltration and provocation can lend to lie efforts of the left of capital against the workers struggle is underlined by the example of "National-Bolshevism" during the German revolution. Under the influence of the pseudo anti-capitalism, the extreme nationalism, anti-semitism and "anti-liberalism" of the illegal secret organisations of the bourgeoisie, with whom they held secret meetings, the Hamburg so-called "Left" around Laufenberg and Wollfheim developed a counter-revolutionary version of "left communism" which contributed decisively to splitting the young KPD in 1919, and to discrediting the KAPD in 1920[8].

The work of bourgeois infiltration of the Hamburg section of the KPD began to be uncovered by the party already in 1919, including over 20 police agents directly connected to the GKSD, a counter-revolutionary regiment in Berlin. "*From here it was repeatedly attempted to get Hamburg workers to launch armed assaults on prisons and other adventurist actions*"[9].

The organiser of this undermining of the Communists in Hamburg, Von Killinger, was a leader of the Organisation Consul, a secret terror and murder organisation financed by the Junkers and aimed at infiltrating and uniting the struggle of all the other right wing groups against communism.

The defence of the revolutionary organisation

In the first part of this article, we saw how the Communist International drew the lessons of the collapse of the 2nd International at the organisational level by opening a much more rigorous struggle against freemasonry and secret societies.

As we have seen, the Second World Congress in 1920, had adopted a motion of the Italian party against the freemasons, officially not part of the "21 conditions" for membership of the Comintern, but unofficially known as the "22 condition"[10].

In fact, the famous 21 conditions of August 1920 obliged all sections of the International to organise clandestine structures, to protect the organisation against infiltration, to investigate the activities of the illegal counter-revolutionary apparatus of the bourgeoisie, and to support the internationally centralised work against capitalist repression.

The Third World Congress in June 1921 adopted principles aimed at better protecting the International from spies and agents provocateurs, and at systematically observing the activities of the official and secret anti-proletarian police and para-military apparatus, the freemasons etc. A special committee, the OMS, was created to coordinate these activities internationally.

The KPD, for example, regularly published lists of agents provocateurs and police spies excluded from its ranks, complete with their photos and descriptions of their methods. *"From August 1921 to August 1922, the Information department uncovered 124 informers, agents provocateurs and swindlers. These were either sent into the KPD by the police or right wing organisations, or had hoped to exploit the KPD financially on their own account"*[11]. Pamphlets were prepared on this question. The KPD also found out who had murdered Liebknecht and Luxemburg and published their photos, asking for the help of the population in hunting them down. A special organisation was established to defend the party against the secret societies and para-military organisations of the bourgeoisie. This work included spectacular actions. Thus, in 1921, KPD members, disguised as policemen, searched the premises and confiscated papers of a Russian White Army office in Berlin. Undercover raids were undertaken against secret offices of the criminal "Organisation Consul".

Above all, the Comintern regularly supplied all workers' organisations with concrete warnings and information about the attempts of the occult arm of the bourgeoisie to destroy them.

After 1968: the revival of occult manipulation against the proletariat

With the defeat of the communist revolution after 1923, the elements of the bourgeoisie's secret anti-proletarian network were either dissolved, or given other tasks by the state. In Germany, many of these elements were later integrated into the Nazi movement.

But when the massive workers' struggles of 1968 in France put an end to the counter-revolution and opened a period of rising class struggle, the bourgeoisie began to revive its hidden anti-proletarian apparatus. In May 1968 in France, the masonic Grand Orient greeted with enthusiasm the "*magnificent movement of the students and workers*" and sent food and medication to the occupied Sorbonne[12].

This "greeting" was lip-service. In France, already after 1968, the bourgeoisie was using its "neo- Templar", "Rosicrucian" and "Martinist" sects in order to infiltrate leftist and other groups, in collaboration with the SAC services. For example, Luc Jeuret, the guru of the "Sun Temple" began his career by infiltrating Maoist groups (**L 'Ordre du Temple Solaire**, from page 145 on).

In fact, the following years saw the appearance of organisations of the type used against the proletarian revolution in the 20s. On the extreme right, the Front Europeen de Liberation has revived the "National-bolshevik" tradition. In Germany, the **Sozialrevolutionare Arbeiterfront** (Social Revolutionary Workers' Front), following its motto "*the frontier is not between left and right but between above and below*" is specialised in infiltrating different "left wing" movements. The Thule Society has also been refounded as a counter revolutionary secret society[13].

To the modern right wing private political intelligence services belong the World Anti-Communist League, as well as the National Caucus of Labour and the European Labour Party, whose leader La Rouche is described by a member of the US National Security Council as having "*the best private intelligence organisation in the world*"[14].

Left-wing versions of such counter-revolutionary organisations are no less active. In France, for instance, new sects have been established in the tradition of "Martinism", a variant of freemasonry historically specialised in the infiltration and subversion of workers' organisations. Such groups put forward the idea that communism can best be achieved by the manipulations of an enlightened minority. Like other sects, they are specialised in the art of manipulating people.

More generally, the development of occult sects and esoteric groupings in the past years is not only an expression of the petty bourgeoisie's hopelessness and hysteria at the historic situation, but is encouraged and organised by the state. The role of these sects in inter-imperialist rivalries is known (e.g the use of Scientology by the US bourgeoisie against Germany). But this whole "esoteric" movement is equally part of the bourgeois ideological onslaught against marxism, especially after 1989 with the alleged "death of communism". Historically, it was in face of the rising socialist movement that the European bourgeoisie began to identify with the mystical ideology of freemasonry, especially after the 1848 revolutions. Today, the unbridled hatred of esotericism for materialism and marxism, as well as for the proletarian masses considered "materialistic" and "stupid", is nothing else but the concentrated hatred of the bourgeoisie and parts of the petty bourgeoisie for an undefeated proletariat. Unable itself to offer any historical alternative, the bourgeoisie opposes marxism with the lie

that stalinism was communist, but also with the mystical vision that the world can only be "saved" when consciousness and rationality have been replaced by ritual, intuition and hocus-pocus.

In the face of today's decomposition of capitalist society, it is the task of revolutionaries to draw the lessons of the experience of the workers movement against what Lenin called "*mysticism as a cloak for counter-revolutionary moods*". And it is our task to reappropriate the vigilance of the workers' movement of the past against the manipulations and infiltration of the occult apparatus of the bourgeoisie.

Krespel

[1] Kowaljow/Malyschew: Terror, Drahtzieher und Attentäter, ("Terror Manipulators and Assassimators"). The East German edition of this Soviet book was issued by the military publishers of the GDR).

[2] Rose: Die Thule-Gesellschaft ; P.19/20

[3] Serge: What Everyone Should Know About State Repression, P.49/50.

[4] Beyer: Von der Novemberrevolution zur Räterepublik in München, P.130/131. See also Frohlich: Bayerische Räterepublik.

[5] Nachrichtendienst, P.43. (See also the books of the expert on questions of political murder during the Weimar Republic, Emil Gumbel).

[6] Der Nachrichten dienst der KPD ("The Intelligence Service of the KPD") published in 1993 by ex-historians of the East German secret police, the "Stasi".

[7] Thule-Gesellschaft. P.55.

[8] Bock: Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus 1918- 23 ("Syndicalism and Left Communism 1918-23").

[9] Nachrichtendienst, P. 21 and 52/54.

[10] See Zinoviev's report to the CI's Third Congress.

[11] **Nachrichterdienst**

[12] **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung** Supplement (18.05.96).

[13] Konkret: **Drahtzieher im braunen Netz** ("String pullers in the brown network")

[14] Quoted in Roth/Ender: **Geschäfte und Verbrechen der Politmafia** P.85 ("Business and Crimes of the Political Mafia").

ICC Extraordinary Conference

At the beginning of this year, the ICC decided to transform the 15th Congress of its section in France into an Extraordinary International Conference. The decision was motivated by the open outbreak of an organisational crisis immediately following its 14th International Congress in April 2001. This crisis has led to the departure from our organisation of several militants, who have recently regrouped in what they call the "Internal Fraction of the ICC". As we shall see, the Conference took note of the fact that these militants had deliberately set themselves outside the organisation, even if today they proclaim to whoever is prepared to listen that they have been "excluded".

While most of the Conference was focused on organisational issues, it also discussed the analysis of the international situation, and adopted the resolution which is published in this issue of the *International Review*.

The aim of this article is to give an account of the conference's most important work, the nature of its discussions, and its decisions on organisational issues, since this was its main purpose. It will also set out our analysis of the self-styled "internal fraction" of the ICC, which presents itself today as the real continuity of the ICC's organisational gains, but which in reality is nothing other than a new parasitic grouping, such as the ICC and other organisations of the proletarian political milieu have had to confront in the past. But before we deal with these questions, it is necessary to consider another, which has been the object of much misunderstanding in today's proletarian political milieu: the importance of questions of functioning for communist organisations.

We say this because we have often heard or read the comment that "the ICC is obsessed with organisational questions", or that "it's articles on the question are of no interest, it's just their own internal affairs". This kind of judgement is understandable enough on the part of non-militants, even when they sympathise with Left Communist positions. When one is not a member of a proletarian political organisation, it is clearly difficult to measure fully the problems that such an organisation can encounter in its functioning. That said, it is much more surprising to meet with this kind of comment on the part of members of organised political groups. This is one of the expressions of the weakness of the present proletarian political milieu, resulting from the organic and political break between today's organisations and those of the past workers' movement, as a result of the counter-revolution which crushed the class from the end of the 1920s until the end of the 1960s.

For this reason, and before we deal with the questions which concerned the conference, we will begin with a brief reminder of some organisational lessons of the past workers'

movement, on the basis in particular of two of the most well-known amongst them: the International Workingmen's Association (IWA), or 1st International (in which Marx and Engels were militants), and the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), whence emerged the Bolshevik Party that in 1917 took the lead of the only victorious proletarian revolution, before it degenerated as a result of its international isolation. We will look more particularly at these organisations' two congresses where organisational issues took centre stage: the IWA's 1872 Hague Congress, and the 1903 Congress of the RSDLP which gave rise to the formation of the Bolshevik and Menshevik fractions, which were to play directly opposing roles in the revolution of 1917.

The IWA was founded in September 1864 in London, on the initiative of a number of French and English workers. It adopted a centralised structure straight away, with a central Council, which after the 1866 Geneva Congress was known as the General Council. Marx was to play a leading role within the Council, since it fell to him to write a large number of its basic texts, such as the IWA's founding address, its statutes, and the address on the Paris Commune (*The Civil War in France*, May 1871). The IWA (or "The International", as the workers called it) quickly became a "power" in the advanced countries (above all in Western Europe). Up till the 1871 Paris Commune, it regrouped a growing number of workers and was a leading factor in the development of the proletariat's two essential weapons: its organisation and its consciousness. This is why, indeed, the International was subjected to increasingly bitter attacks by the bourgeoisie: slander in the press, infiltration by informers, persecution of its members, etc. But the IWA ran the greatest danger from the attacks of some of its own members against the International's very mode of organisation.

Already, when the IWA was founded, the provisional rules were translated by the Parisian sections, strongly influenced by Proudhon's federalist conceptions, in a way that considerably weakened the International's centralised character. But the most dangerous attacks were to come later, with the entry into its ranks of the "*Alliance de la démocratie socialiste*" founded by Bakunin. This latter was to find fertile ground within important sections of the International, due to its own weaknesses, which were in turn the result of the weaknesses of the proletariat at the time, characteristic of its previous stage of development.

This weakness was especially marked in the most backward sectors of the European proletariat, where it had only just emerged from the peasant and artisan classes. Bakunin, who entered the International in 1868 after the collapse of the "League for Peace and Liberty", used these weaknesses to try to subject the International to his anarchist conceptions, and to bring it under his control. The tool for this operation was to be the "*Alliance de la démocratie socialiste*", which he had founded as a minority in the League for Peace and Liberty.

The latter was an organisation of bourgeois republicans, founded on the initiative notably of Garibaldi and Victor Hugo, one of whose main objectives was to compete with the IWA for the support of the working class. Bakunin was a member of the League's

leadership, which he claimed gave it a "revolutionary impetus", and urged it to propose a merger with the IWA, refused by the latter at its Brussels congress in 1868. Following the failure of the League for Peace and Liberty, Bakunin decided to enter the IWA, not just as a militant but as part of the leadership.

"To be recognised as leader of the International, he had to present himself as the leader of another army, whose absolute devotion to his person was to be assured by a secret organisation. After openly implanting his society in the International, he intended to spread its ramifications into every section, and so to take over an absolute authority. With this aim, he founded the (public) Alliance for Socialist Democracy in Geneva (?) But this public Alliance hid another, which in its turn was directed by the still more secret Alliance of the international brotherhood, the Centurion Guards of the dictator Bakunin".¹

The Alliance was thus both a public and a secret society, which in fact intended to form an International within the International. Its secret structure and the collusion this allowed amongst its members was supposed to ensure its "influence" over as many of the IWA's sections as possible, especially those where anarchist conceptions encountered the greatest echo. In itself, the existence of several different trends of thought within the IWA did not pose any problem. By contrast, the activity of the Alliance, aimed at replacing the official structure of the International, was a serious factor of disorganisation, and endangered the latter's very existence. The Alliance first tried to take control of the International at the Basle Congress in September 1869 by trying to have a motion adopted in favour of the abolition of the right of inheritance, against the motion proposed by the General Council. With this aim in view, its members, in particular Bakunin and James Guillaume, warmly supported an administrative resolution strengthening the powers of the General Council. Failing in this, however, the Alliance (which itself had adopted secret statutes based on an extreme centralisation) began a campaign against the "dictatorship" of the General Council, which it aimed to reduce to the role of a "statistical and correspondence bureau" to use the Alliancists terms, or to a mere "letter-box" as Marx answered them. Against the principle of centralisation as an expression of the proletariat's international unity, the Alliance preached "federalism", the complete "autonomy of the sections", and the non-obligatory nature of Congress decisions. In fact, the alliance wanted to do whatever it liked in the sections that had come under its control. The way would be open to the complete disorganisation of the IWA.

This was the danger faced by the Hague Congress in 1872. This congress was essentially devoted to organisational questions. As we wrote in the *International Review* n°87 *"after the fall of the Paris Commune, the absolute priority for the workers' movement became to shake off the weight of its own sectarian past, to overcome the influence of petty bourgeois socialism. It is this political framework which explains the fact that the central question dealt with at the Hague Congress was not the Paris Commune itself, but the defence of the statutes of the International against the plots of Bakunin and his supporters"* ("The Hague Congress of 1872: The struggle against political parasitism").

After confirming the decisions of the London Conference, which had been held one year previously, in particular those concerning the necessity for the working class to create its own political party and on the strengthening of the authority of the General Council, the Congress debated the question of the Alliance on the basis of a report by an enquiry commission, and finally decided on the exclusion of Bakunin and James Guillaume, the leader of the Jura Federation of the IWA, which was completely under the control of the Alliance. It is worth highlighting certain aspects of the attitude of members of the Alliance at or on the eve of the Congress:

- several sections controlled by the Alliance (in particularly the Jura Federation, and certain sections in Spain and the United States) refused to pay their dues to the General Council, and their delegates only paid their debt (of their back dues) under the threat of seeing their mandate invalidated;

- the delegates from sections controlled by the Alliance undertook a veritable blackmail of the Congress, demanding that it violate its own rules by taking account solely of votes based on imperative mandates, and threatening to withdraw if the Congress did not meet their demands;²

- the refusal by certain members of the Alliance to co-operate with the Commission of Enquiry established by the Congress, or even to recognise it, accusing it of being a "Holy Inquisition".³

This Congress was the IWA's high point (it was the only Congress that Marx attended, which gives an idea of how important he considered it), but also its swan song because of the crushing defeat of the Paris Commune and the demoralisation that this provoked within the proletariat. Marx and Engels were aware of this reality. This is why, along with the measures aimed at keeping the IWA out of the hands of the Alliance, they also proposed that the General Council be moved to New York, far from the conflicts that were dividing the International. This was also a means for allowing the International to die a natural death (confirmed by the 1876 Philadelphia Conference), without its prestige being hijacked by the Bakuninist intriguers.

The latter, and the anarchists have perpetuated this legend, claimed that Marx and the General Council excluded Bakunin and Guillaume because of their different vision of the question of the state (when they did not explain the conflict between Marx and Bakunin by questions of personality). In short, Marx was supposed to have wanted to settle a disagreement on general theoretical questions with administrative measures. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Hague Congress took no measures against the members of the Spanish delegation, who shared Bakunin's ideas and had belonged to the Alliance, but who declared that they no longer did so. Similarly, the "anti-authoritarian" IWA formed after the Hague Congress from the Federations which refused to accept its decisions was not made up solely of anarchists, since it also included the German Lassalleans, who were great

defenders of "state socialism" to use Marx's words. In fact, the real struggle within the IWA was between those who stood for the unity of the workers' movement (and therefore the binding nature of Congress decisions), and those who demanded the right to do whatever they pleased, each isolated from the others, treating the Congresses as mere assemblies, where everyone could exchange "points of view" without taking any decisions. With this informal mode of organisation, it would fall to the Alliance to carry out, in secret, a real centralisation of the Federations, as indeed Bakunin's correspondence explicitly stated. Putting these "anti-authoritarian" conceptions to work in the International would have been the best way to deliver it up to the intrigues, and the hidden and uncontrolled power of the Alliance, in other words the adventurers who led it.

The 2nd Congress of the RSDLP was the occasion for a similar confrontation between the defenders of a proletarian conception of the revolutionary organisation, and the petty-bourgeois conception.

There are similarities between the situation in the West European workers' movement at the time of the IWA, and the movement in Russia at the turn of the century. In both cases, the workers' movement was still in its youth, the separation in time being due to Russia's late industrial development. The IWA's purpose was to regroup in a united organisation, the different workers' societies that the proletariat's development had created. Similarly, the aim of the RSDLP's 2nd Congress was to unite the different committees, groups and circles of the social democracy which had developed in Russia and in exile. Following the disappearance of the Central Committee, which had been formed by the RSDLP's 1st Congress in 1897, there had been almost no formal links between these different formations. The 2nd Congress thus saw, as with the IWA, a confrontation between a conception of the organisation representing the movement's past, that of the "Mensheviks" ("minorityites") and a conception expressing the requirements of the new situation, that of the "Bolsheviks" ("majorityites").

The Mensheviks' approach, as it became clear later (very quickly in the revolution of 1905, and still more of course during the revolution of 1917, when the Mensheviks stood alongside the bourgeoisie), was determined by the penetration of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, in particular of the anarchist variety, within the Russian social-democracy. In particular, as Lenin noted, "*Most of the opposition [ie the Mensheviks] was made up of our Party's intellectual elements*", who thus became the bearers of petty-bourgeois conceptions of the organisational question. These elements, as a result, "*naturally raise the standard of revolt against the indispensable restrictions of the organisation, and they establish their spontaneous anarchism as a principle of struggle (...) making demands in favour of 'tolerance' etc*" (Lenin, op cit). And indeed, there are many similarities between the behaviour of the Mensheviks and that of the anarchists in the IWA (Lenin speaks on several occasions of the Mensheviks "aristocratic anarchism").

Like the anarchists after the Hague Congress, the Mensheviks refused to recognise and apply the decisions of the 2nd RSDLP Congress, declaring that "*the Congress is not divine*" and that "*its decisions are not sacred*". In particular, just as the Bakuninists went to war against the principle of centralisation and the "dictatorship of the General Council" after failing to take control of it, one reason that the Mensheviks began to reject centralisation after the Congress was the fact that several of them had been removed from the central organs elected by the Congress. There are even likenesses in the way the Mensheviks campaigned against Lenin's "personal dictatorship" and "iron fist", which echo Bakunin's accusations of Marx's "dictatorship" over the General Council.

*"When I consider the approach of the friends of Martov after the Congress (...) I can only say that this is an insane attempt, unworthy of Party members, to tear the Party apart (...) And why? **Solely** because one is discontented at the makeup of the central organs, because **objectively** this is the **only** question which separated us, since the subjective appreciations (such as offence, insults, expulsions, pushing aside, casting slurs, etc) **were nothing but the fruit of wounded pride and a sick imagination**. This sick imagination and wounded pride led straight to the most shameful gossiping: **without waiting to find out about the activity of the new centres, nor having seen them in action**, some go about spreading gossip about their "inadequacy", or about the "iron glove" of Ivan Ivanovitch, or the "fist" of Ivan Nikiforovitch, etc (...) Russian social-democracy still has a difficult step to take, from the circle spirit to the **party spirit**; from a petty-bourgeois mentality to a **consciousness of its revolutionary duty**; gossip and the pressure of circles considered as a means of action, against **discipline**" (Lenin, Report on the 2nd Congress of the RSDLP).*

It is worth noting that the weapon of blackmail used in their day by Guillaume and the Alliance was also part of the Mensheviks' arsenal. Martov, the Mensheviks' leading figure, refused to take part in the editorial committee of the party's publication *Iskra*, to which he had been elected by the Congress, on the grounds that his friends Axelrod, Potressov and Zassoulitch had not been appointed to it.

Given the examples of the IWA and the 2nd Congress of the RSDLP, we can see the importance of questions linked to the mode of organisation of revolutionary formations. In fact, these were the questions that were to produce the first decisive decantation between the proletarian current on the one hand, and the bourgeois and petty bourgeois currents on the other. This importance is no accident. It springs precisely from the fact that one of the main channels for the infiltration of ideologies foreign to the proletariat - bourgeois or petty-bourgeois - is precisely that of their functioning.

Marxists have thus always paid the greatest attention to the organisational question. Within the IWA, Marx and Engels themselves took the lead in the fight to defend proletarian principles. And it was no accident that they played a decisive role in the decision by the Hague Congress to devote most of its labours to organisational questions, at a time when the working class had just been confronted with two of the

most important events of the period, which received much less attention: the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune. This choice has led most bourgeois historians to consider this Congress as being the least important of the IWA's history, whereas it was in reality the most important since it made it possible for the 2nd International to make new advances in the development of the workers' movement.

Within the 2nd International, Lenin was also seen as "obsessed" with the organisational question. The quarrels that agitated Russian Social Democracy were incomprehensible within the other socialist parties, and Lenin was seen as a "sectarian" who dreamed of nothing but splits. In fact, it was Lenin who drew the deepest inspiration from Marx and Engels' struggle against the Alliance. The validity of his combat was to be brilliantly demonstrated in 1917, by his party's ability to take the lead in the revolution.

The ICC, for its part, has followed the tradition of Marx and Lenin in paying the greatest attention to organisational questions. In January 1982, the ICC devoted an Extraordinary Conference to the question following the crisis of 1981.⁴ Finally, between late 1993 and 1996, our organisation undertook a fundamental battle to strengthen its organisational tissue, against the "circle spirit" and for the "party spirit" as Lenin defined them in 1903. Our *International Review* n°82 gives an account of the ICC's 11th Congress, which was essentially devoted to the organisational questions that we confronted at the time.⁵ We followed this with a series of articles on organisational questions devoted to the struggles within the IWA (*International Review* n°85-88), and two articles entitled "Have we become Leninists?" (*International Review* n°96-97) on the fight by Lenin and the Bolsheviks on the organisational issue. Finally, in our previous issue, we published substantial extracts from an internal document on the question of functioning within the ICC, which served as an orientation text for the struggle of 1993-96.

A transparent attitude vis-à-vis the difficulties encountered by our organisation has nothing to do with any 'exhibitionism' on our part. The experience of communist organisations is an integral part of the experience of the working class. This is why Lenin devoted an entire book, *One step forward, two steps back* to the 2nd Congress of the RSDLP. By giving an account of its organisational life, the ICC is thus doing nothing other than assuming its responsibility in the face of the working class.

Obviously, when a revolutionary organisation publicises its problems and internal discussions, this is a choice dish for all the adversaries waiting to denigrate it. This is also, and even especially, the case for the ICC. As we wrote in *International Review* n°82, "*we won't find any jubilation in the bourgeois press over the difficulties that our organisation is going through today: the ICC is still too small, both in its size and in its influence amongst the working masses, for the bourgeoisie to have any interest in talking about it and trying to discredit it. It is preferable for the bourgeoisie to erect a wall of silence around the positions and even the existence of revolutionary organisations. This is why the work of denigrating them, and sabotaging their intervention, is undertaken by a whole series of groups and parasitic elements whose function is to drive away individuals*

who are coming towards class positions, to disgust them with any participation in the difficult task of developing a proletarian political milieu (?) Within the parasitic movement, we find fully-fledged groups like the 'Groupe Communiste Internationaliste' (GCI) and its splits (such as 'Contre le Courant'), the defunct 'Communist Bulletin Group' (CBG) or the ex-"External Fraction of the ICC", which were all formed from splits from the ICC. But parasitism is not limited to such groups. It is also spread by unorganised elements, who may meet from time to time in ephemeral discussion groups whose main concern is to circulate all kinds of gossip about our organisation.⁶ These elements are often ex-militants who have given in to the pressure of petty-bourgeois ideology and have proven unable to maintain their commitment within the organisation, or who have been frustrated that the organisation failed to give them the recognition they thought they deserved, or again who could not stand being the object of criticism (?) Obviously, these elements are absolutely incapable of building anything whatever. By contrast, they are often very effective, with their petty agitation and their concierge's chatter, at discrediting and destroying what the organisation is trying to build" ("11th Congress of the ICC").

However, it is not the wriggling of the parasites that will prevent the ICC from setting before the whole proletarian milieu the lessons of its own experience. In the preface to *One step forward, two steps back*, in 1904, Lenin wrote: "*They [our adversaries] exult and grimace at the sight of our discussions; obviously, they will try, to serve their own purposes, to brandish my pamphlet devoted to the defects and weaknesses in our Party. The Russian social-democrats are sufficiently tempered in battle not to be troubled by such pinpricks, and to continue in spite of everything with their task of self-criticism, mercilessly unveiling their own weaknesses, which will be overcome necessarily and without fail by the growth of the workers' movement. Let our adversaries try to give us an image of the situation in their own 'parties' which comes close to that presented by the minutes of our 2nd Congress!*".

We intend to adopt the same approach in giving an account of the problems of functioning which have affected our organisation lately, and which were at the centre of the work of the Conference.

The origins of the ICC's recent organisational difficulties

The ICC's 11th Congress adopted a resolution on its activities which drew the main lessons from the crisis our organisation underwent in 1993, and from the struggle for its recovery. We published large extracts in *International Review* n°82, and we reproduce some of them here since they throw a light on our recent difficulties.

*"The framework of analysis the ICC adopted for laying bare the origins of its weaknesses was in continuity with the historic struggle waged by marxism against the influence of petty bourgeois ideology that weighed on the organisation of the proletariat (...) In particular, it was vital for the organisation to have as its central concern, as it was for the Bolsheviks after 1903, the struggle **against the circle spirit and for the party spirit** (...) It is in this sense that becoming aware of the weight of the circle spirit in our origins*

was an integral part of a general analysis elaborated long before, the one which saw the basis of our weaknesses in the break in the organic continuity with previous communist organisations, the result of the counter-revolution which descended on the working class at the end of the 20s. However, this realisation allowed us to go further than we had done before and to go to the deeper roots of our difficulties. In particular, it allowed us to understand the phenomenon - already noted in the past but not sufficiently elucidated - of the formation of clans in the organisation: these clans were in reality the result of the decomposition of the circle spirit which kept going long after the period in which circles had been an unavoidable step in the reconstruction of the communist vanguard" (11th Congress Resolution on activities, point 4).

On the question of clans, our article on the 11th Congress made this point: "This analysis was based on previous experiences of the workers' movement (for example, the attitude of the former editors of Iskra grouped around Martov who, unhappy with the decisions of the 2nd Congress of the RSDLP, had formed the Menshevik fraction), but also on precedents in the history of the ICC. We can't go into detail here but what we can say is that the 'tendencies' which have appeared in the ICC corresponded much more to such a clan dynamic than to real tendencies based on an alternative positive orientation. The principal motor of these 'tendencies' was not the divergences their members may have had with the orientations of the organisation. Instead they were based on an agglomeration of elements frustrated and discontented with the central organs, of those 'loyal' to individuals who saw themselves as being 'persecuted' or insufficiently recognised".

The article emphasised that the whole ICC (including the militants most directly involved in it) recognised that it was faced with a clan which occupied a particularly important position in the organisation and which, while it was not simply an organic product of the ICC's weaknesses, had "concentrated and crystallised a great number of the deleterious characteristics which affected the organisation and whose common denominator was anarchism..." (Activities resolution, point 5).

The resolution continued "The ICC's understanding of the phenomenon of the clans and their particularly destructive role has allowed it to put its finger on a large amount of the bad functioning which affected most of the territorial sections" (idem, point 5).

It drew up a balance sheet of our organisation's struggle: "... the Congress notes the overall success of the combat engaged by the ICC in the autumn of 1993 (...) the - sometimes spectacular - redressment of some of the sections with the greatest organisational difficulties in 1993 (...), the deepening that has come from a number of sections in the ICC (...), all these facts confirm the full validity of the combat both in its theoretical bases and its concrete application".

However, the resolution also warned against any kind of triumphalism: "This does not mean that the combat we have conducted to date should come to an end. (...) The ICC will have to continue this combat through a permanent vigilance, the determination to identify

every weakness and to confront it without delay. (...) In reality, the history of the workers' movement, including that of the ICC, teaches us, and the debate has fully confirmed this, that the struggle for the defence of the organisation is a permanent one, and without respite. In particular, the ICC must remember that the Bolsheviks' struggle for the party spirit, and against the circle spirit continued for many years. It will be the same for our organisation, which will have to watch for and eliminate any demoralisation, any feeling of impotence as a result of the length of the combat." (ibid, point 13).

And precisely, the ICC's recent Conference pointed out that one of the major causes of our organisational problems during the last decade was a relaxation in our vigilance faced with a reappearance of the difficulties and weaknesses which had affected the organisation in the past. In reality, the greater part of the organisation had lost sight of the warning which concluded the resolution of the 11th Congress. It consequently had the greatest difficulty in identifying the reappearance of clannism within the Paris section and within the International Secretariat (IS)⁷, in other words the two parts of the organisation which had been the most affected by this disease in 1993.

The development of the crisis at the heart of the ICC and the formation of the "internal fraction"

The slide into clannism got under way in March 2000, when the IS adopted a document on questions of functioning which was criticised by a small number of comrades. While they recognised the entire validity of most of the ideas in the text, notably on the need for a greater confidence among the different parts of the organisation, they considered that it made certain concessions to a democratist vision, and tended to call into question our conceptions of centralisation. To summarise, they considered that the document led to an idea that "more confidence means less centralisation". It has never been a problem for the ICC that some parts of the organisation should criticise a text adopted by the central organ. On the contrary, the ICC and its central organ have always insisted that every disagreement or doubt should be expressed openly within the organisation in order to reach the greatest possible clarity. The attitude of the central organ towards disagreements has always been to answer them as seriously as possible. But in the spring of 2000, the majority of the IS adopted a quite different attitude from what had been its habit in the past. For this majority, the fact that a tiny minority of comrades criticised a text of the IS could only spring from a spirit of opposition for opposition's sake, or from the fact that one of them was affected by family problems while another was suffering from depression. One argument used by the IS members was to say that the text had been written by a particular militant, and would have had a different reception had it been the work of a different author. The response to the arguments of the comrades in disagreement was therefore not to put forward counter-arguments, but to denigrate the comrades or even to try to avoid publishing their texts on the grounds that they would "spread crap in the organisation", or that comrades who had been affected by the pressure brought to bear on them would not be able to stand the pressure of responses by other ICC militants to these texts. In short, the IS developed a completely hypocritical policy of stifling debate in the name of "solidarity".

This political attitude, totally foreign to the ICC's methods up till then, suddenly underwent a further degeneration when a member of the IS in turn began to support some of the criticisms made of the document adopted by the commission in March 2000. Relatively immune from denigration till then, this militant himself now became the target of a campaign aimed at discrediting him: if he adopted this or that position, it was because he was being "manipulated by someone close to him". At the same time, the attitude of the IS was to reduce the discussions on the question as far as possible to a banality, declaring that it was not "the debate of the century". And when more developed and critical contributions began to appear, the majority of the IS tried to push the whole of the ICC's central organ into declaring the debate closed. The International Bureau refused to follow the IS. It also decided, against the will of the latter's majority, to create a Delegation for Information, mostly made up of comrades who were not members of the IS, and charged with examining the problems of functioning which were developing in and around the commission.

These decisions prompted a new "radicalisation" among the majority of the IS' members. They addressed to the Delegation for Information all kinds of accusations against the comrades in disagreement, pointing out all kinds of particularly serious "organisational failings" on their part, "alerting" the Delegation to the "dubious" or "unworthy" behaviour of one of these militants. In short, those members of the IS who had considered the creation of the Delegation to be a waste of time now informed it of a cunning and destructive attack on the organisation, which should have made them the first to call for the formation of just such a Delegation in order to conduct an enquiry into these militants. One member of the IS - Jonas - not only refused to appear before the Delegation, but refused outright to recognise it.⁸ At the same time, he began - behind the scenes - to spread the idea that one of the militants in disagreement was a state agent manipulating those around her with the aim of "destroying the ICC". Other IS members tried different ways of putting pressure on the Delegation, and in early May 2001 several of them tried to intimidate the Delegation into renouncing its communication to the Congress of a "preliminary communication" laying down a framework for understanding the problems that were affecting the IS and the Paris section.⁹ On the very morning of the Congress, just before it began, the majority of the IS tried a final manoeuvre: they demanded that the International Bureau meet in order to adopt a resolution disavowing the work of the Delegation for Information. The DI had already been convinced of the existence of a clannish dynamic within the IS far more by the attitude of the majority of the latter's members than by the testimony of the comrades who had criticised the IS' policy. Similarly, the majority of the IB was convinced of the existence of the same dynamic fundamentally by the attitude of the IS members at this last meeting before the Congress. At the time, however, the IB counted on these militants' ability to come to their senses, as had already been the case of an important number of militants who had been caught in a clannish dynamic in 1993. This is why the IB proposed that all the militants belonging to the old IS should be re-elected to the central organ. At the same time, it proposed that the old Delegation for Information should be strengthened to include other comrades and become an Information Commission. Finally, it proposed to the Congress that it should not yet

communicate the DI's preliminary conclusions, and asked the Congress to accord its confidence to the new Information Commission. The Congress ratified unanimously these proposals.

Two days after the Congress, a member of the old IS violated the Congress' decisions by revealing in the Paris section the information which the IB, with the Congress' approval, had decided to withhold until it could be communicated in full and in an appropriate framework. His aim was to set the Paris section against the rest of the ICC and against the International Bureau. The other members of the old IS majority supported him, and refused to condemn this outright violation of the organisation's statutes.

Inasmuch as the Congress is the organisation's sovereign body, the deliberate violation of its decisions (like the Mensheviks in 1903) is a particularly serious fault. At the time, however, the militant was not sanctioned beyond a verbal condemnation of his action: the organisation continued to count on the capacity of the clan's members to get a grip on themselves. In reality, this violation of the statutes was only the first in a long line of infractions by members of the old IS or those they persuaded to follow in their open war against the organisation. We have not the space to detail all these infractions here; we will limit ourselves to some characteristic examples, for which the members of the present "internal fraction" are responsible to varying degrees:

- the use and publication of the proceedings of the central organs without the latter's consent;
- campaigns of slander against members of the Information Commission, accused of being "liars" and "Torquemadas" (after a leader of the Spanish Inquisition, which is reminiscent of Alerini's denunciation of the Hague Congress Enquiry Commission as a "Holy Inquisition");
- systematic and slanderous campaigns behind the scenes against a member of the organisation, accused without a shadow of proof of "indignity", being an adventurer, or even a state agent (this latter accusation being explicitly put about by Jonas and another member of the present "fraction", but also suggested by other militants close to him), manipulating others in order to destroy the ICC;
- secret correspondence by members of the ICC's central organ with militants in other countries in order to spread slanders against those they now described as the "liquidationist faction", and to turn them against the International Bureau (in other words the same policy that Bakunin used to recruit for his "Alliance");
- holding secret meetings (five during August and September 2001), whose aim was not to work out political analyses but to hatch a plot against the ICC. When the militants involved in these meetings announced the formation of a "Working Collective", they declared amongst other things that *"we are not holding secret meetings"*.

It was only by accident, and as a result of the clumsiness of one of this brotherhood's members, that the proceedings of one of these secret meetings came into the organisation's hands.

Shortly afterwards, a plenary session of the International Bureau adopted unanimously (in other words, including the votes of two members of the present "internal fraction") a resolution whose main passages we quote here:

"1. Having read () the proceedings of the meeting of 20/08 between the seven comrades forming the so-called 'working collective', and after examining its content where are expressed:

- an openly declared awareness that they are acting outside the statutes and have no preoccupation other than how to hide the fact from the rest of the organisation;*
- the rest of the organisation considered as 'the others', 'them', in other words enemies who have to be 'destabilised' in the words of one of the participants;*
- the intention of hiding their real thoughts and activity from the rest of the organisation;*
- the establishment of a group discipline at the same time as they advocated violating the discipline of the organisation;*
- the elaboration of a strategy to deceive the organisation and to impose their own policies;*

the IB condemns this behaviour, which is in flagrant violation of our organisational principles and reveals an utter disloyalty towards the rest of the organisation (?)

2. The activity of the members of the 'collective' constitutes an extremely serious organisational fault and deserves the severest sanctions. However, inasmuch as the participants at this meeting have decided to disband the 'collective', the IB decides to forego the sanction, with the intention that the militants who have committed the fault should not merely disband the 'collective' but:

- should undertake a thorough critique of their behaviour;*
- should undertake a reflection in depth on the reasons that led them to behave as enemies of the organisation.*

In this sense, this resolution of the IB should not be interpreted as an under-estimation of the seriousness of the fault committed, but as an encouragement to the participants in the secret meeting of 20/08 to realise this seriousness".

Confronted with the destructive nature of their behaviour, the members of the "collective" took a step back. Two of those who had taken part in the secret meetings

really did apply what the resolution asked: they undertook a sincere critique of their approach and are today loyal militants of the ICC. Two others, despite having voted in favour of the resolution, preferred to resign rather than undertake the required critique. As for the others, they all too quickly dumped their good intentions, only a few weeks later forming the "internal fraction of the ICC" and adopting the "Declaration" of the "working collective" which they had rejected a short time before.

No sooner was this self-styled "fraction" formed, than its members distinguished themselves by undertaking an escalation of attacks against the organisation and its militants, combining an utter vacuity of political argument, the most outrageous lies, the most disgusting slanders, and a systematic violation of our rules of functioning which obviously forced the ICC to sanction them.¹⁰ A resolution adopted on 18th November 2001 by the central organ of the section in France declared: "*The militants of the 'fraction' say that they want to convince the rest of the organisation of the validity of their 'analyses'. Their behaviour, and their enormous lies, prove that this is just one more lie (?) With their present behaviour, they are certainly unlikely to convince anybody at all (?) In particular, the Executive Commission denounces the 'tactic' which consists of systematically violating the ICC's statutes, in order to be able - when the organisation is forced to take measures to defend itself - to shout about 'Stalinist degeneration' and so justify the formation of a self-styled 'fraction'*".

One of "fraction's" endlessly repeated lies is that the ICC has sanctioned them in order to avoid debating the fundamental questions. The truth is that their arguments have been refuted repeatedly, often in depth, by numerous contributions from individual militants and sections of the ICC, whereas their own texts systematically avoid replying either to these contributions, or even to the official reports and orientation texts proposed by the central organs. This is in fact one of the "fraction's" favourite methods: attributing their own turpitude to the rest of the organisation, and more especially to those they describe as the "liquidationist faction". For example, in one of their first "founding texts", a "counter-report" on the ICC's activities for the September 2001 IB Plenum, they accuse the ICC's central organs of adopting "*an orientation that breaks with that of the organisation hitherto (?) from the end of the combat of 1993-96 to the 14th Congress which has just been held*". And to demonstrate just how much he agrees with the orientations of the 14th Congress, a few weeks later the author of this document? rejects *en bloc* the activities resolution adopted by the Congress, and which he himself had voted. In the same vein, the "counter-report" haughtily declares that "*we refer to the combat which has always existed (?) for the rigorous, rather than the 'rigid' respect for the statutes. Without a firm respect for the statutes and their defence, there is no more organisation*". And yet this document serves as a platform for secret meetings whose participants agree amongst themselves that they are outside the statutes, and only weeks later begin to write pages and pages of pretentious pseudo-theory with the sole aim of justifying the systematic violation of the statutes.

We could go on with more examples of the same kind, but the article would fill the entire *Review*. We will however cite one more, significant, example: the "fraction's"

pretension to be the real defender of the continuity of our struggle for the defence of the organisation during 1993-96. This does not prevent the "counter-report" from declaring that "*The lessons of 1993 are not limited to clannism. Indeed this is not their principal element*". Better still, the "Declaration" of the formation of the "working collective" asks: "*Clans and clannism: notions to be found in the history of sects and free-masonry, but not (?) in the workers' movement of the past? Why? Can the alpha and omega of organisational questions be reduced to the 'danger of clannism'?*". In fact, the members of the "fraction" aim to put over the idea that the notion of the "clan" does not belong to the workers' movement (which is false, since Rosa Luxemburg already used the term to describe the coterie of the German social-democratic leadership). This is indeed a radical method for refuting the ICC's analysis that these militants' behaviour is the evidence of a clan dynamic: "*the notion of the clan is invalid*". And all that in the name of the struggle of 1993-96, whose most important documents we have cited at length and which all insist on the fundamental role of clannism in the weaknesses of the ICC!

The formation of a parasitic group

Like the Alliance within the IWA, the "fraction" became a parasitic organism within the ICC. And just like the Alliance, which declared open and public war on the IWA once it had failed to take control of it, the clan of the old majority in the IS and its friends has decided to attack our organisation publicly as soon as it realised that it had lost all control over it, and that its behaviour, far from rallying the hesitant had on the contrary allowed these comrades to understand what was really at stake in the struggle for our organisation. The decisive moment in this qualitative step in the "fraction's" war against the ICC was the plenary session of the International Bureau at the beginning of 2002. After serious discussion, this meeting adopted a certain number of important decisions:

- a) the transformation of the French section's congress, planned for March 2002, into an international extraordinary conference of the whole ICC;
- b) the suspension of the members of the "fraction" for a whole series of violations of the statutes (including the refusal to pay their dues in full); the organisation left them until the conference to reflect, and to commit themselves to respecting the statutes failing which the conference could only conclude that they had placed themselves deliberately and of their own accord outside the organisation;
- c) a decision in principle to exclude Jonas, following a detailed report by the Information Commission which highlighted his behaviour, worthy of that of an *agent provocateur*, the definitive decision to be taken only once Jonas had been made aware of the accusation against him and had had an opportunity to present his defence.¹¹

It is worth noting that the two members of the "fraction" who took part in the plenary session abstained on the first decision. This is a thoroughly paradoxical attitude on the part of militants who constantly declared that the militants of the ICC as a whole were being deceived and manipulated by the "liquidationist faction" and the "decisional

organs". No sooner was the opportunity given to the whole organisation to discuss and decide collectively on our problems, than our valiant fractionists put up an obstruction. This is an attitude totally opposed to that of the left fractions in the workers' movement, who always demanded that congresses be held to handle problems in the organisation, something that the right systematically avoided.

As for the other two decisions, the International Bureau pointed out that the militants concerned could appeal against them to the conference, and proposed that Jonas should submit his case to a jury of honour formed by militants of the proletarian political milieu if he considered himself unjustly accused by the ICC. Their response was a new escalation. Jonas refused either to meet the organisation to present his defence, or to appeal to the Conference, or to ask to be heard by a jury of honour: so crushing is the evidence that it is clear for all the militants of the ICC, and for Jonas himself, that he has no honour to defend. At the same time, Jonas announced his entire confidence in the "fraction". The "fraction" itself began to spread slanders against the ICC in public, first by writing to the other groups of the Communist Left, then by sending several texts to our subscribers, thus revealing that the member of the "fraction" who had been responsible for the file of subscribers until the summer of 2001 had stolen the file even before the formation of the "collective", let alone the "fraction". In the documents sent to our subscribers, we can read in particular that the central organs of the ICC have conducted against Jonas and the "fraction" *"ignoble campaigns to hide and try to discredit the political positions, which they are unable to answer seriously"*. The rest is of the same ilk. The "fraction's" documents distributed outside the ICC testify to the "fraction's" total solidarity with Jonas and call him to work with them. The "fraction" thus reveals itself for what it has been right from the beginning, when Jonas remained in the shadows: a camarilla of the friends of Citizen Jonas.

Despite their open and public war on the ICC by the Jonas camarilla, our organisation's central organ sent several letters to each Parisian member of the "fraction", inviting them to present their defence to the conference. The "fraction" at first pretended to accept, but at the last minute carried out its final and most wretched action against our organisation. It refused to appear before the conference unless the organisation recognised the "fraction" in writing and withdrew all the sanctions adopted in conformity with our statutes (including the exclusion of Jonas). To appeal against the sanctions adopted by the organisation, these militants simply demanded that we start by withdrawing the sanctions. This is obviously the simplest solution - they would no longer have anything to appeal against! Confronted with this situation, all the delegations of the ICC, although they were ready to listen to the arguments of these militants (indeed, on the evening before the conference the delegations had already formed an appeals commission composed of members from several territorial delegations with a view to allowing the Parisian members of the "fraction" to present their arguments), had no alternative but to recognise that these elements had put themselves outside the organisation. Faced with their refusal to defend themselves before the conference and to present their arguments to the appeals commission, the

ICC noted their desertion and could thus no longer consider them as members of the organisation.¹²

The conference also condemned unanimously the criminal methods used by the Jonas camarilla, consisting of the "kidnapping" (with their agreement?) of two delegates of the Mexican section as soon as they arrived at the airport. These members of the "fraction" were delegated by their section to defend their positions at the conference, and their airfares had already been paid by the ICC. They were met by two Parisian members of the "fraction", who took them away and refused to allow them to attend the conference. When we protested, and demanded that the "fraction" should repay the price of the airfares should the Mexican delegates fail to attend the conference, a Parisian member of the "fraction" replied with incredible cynicism: "*That's your problem!*" All the militants of the ICC have expressed their profound indignation by adopting a resolution denouncing the embezzlement of the ICC's funds and the refusal to repay the money spent by the organisation, revelatory of the criminal methods used by the Jonas camarilla. These methods are on a par with those of the Chénier tendency (which stole equipment from the organisation in 1981), and finally convinced the last comrades who hesitated to recognise the parasitic and anti-proletarian nature of this self-styled "fraction". The "fraction" has since replied to the ICC, refusing to return the political material and the money belonging to our organisation. The Jonas camarilla has today become, not only a parasitic group whose nature the ICC has already analysed in its "Theses on parasitism" published in the *International Review* n°94,¹³ but a criminal gang, which not only practices slander and blackmail to destroy our organisation, but steals as well.

The transformation of longstanding militants of our organisation, most of whom had important responsibilities in the central organs, into a criminal gang, immediately raises the question: how is such a thing possible? The influence of Jonas has obviously played a part in constantly pushing the members of the "fraction" to "radicalise" their attacks on the ICC in the name of "rejecting centrism". That said, this explanation is far from adequate in explaining such a degeneration, and the Conference laid the basis for going further in our understanding.

The conference's political framework for understanding our difficulties

On the one hand, the conference recognised that the fact that longstanding militants of a proletarian organisation betray the struggle they have engaged in for decades, is not a new phenomenon in the workers' movement: militants of the first order such as Plekhanov (the founding father of marxism in Russia) or Kautsky (the marxist reference of the German social-democracy, the "pope" of the 2nd International) ended their militant lives in the ranks of the ruling class (the first supported the war in 1914, the second condemned the Russian revolution of 1917).

Moreover, the conference set the question of clannism within the wider question of opportunism:

"The circle spirit and clannism, these key questions posed by the orientation text of 1993, are but particular expressions of a more general phenomenon: opportunism in organisational questions. It is evident that this tendency, which in the case of relatively small groups such as the Russian Party in 1903 or the ICC has been closely linked to circle and clannish forms of affinitarianism, did not express itself in the same way for instance within the mass parties of the declining Second or Third Internationals.

"Nonetheless, the different expressions of this same phenomenon necessarily share certain principle characteristics. Among these, one of the most notable is the incapacity of opportunism to engage in a proletarian debate. In particular, it is unable to maintain organisational discipline as soon as it finds itself defending minority positions.

"There are two principle expressions of this incapacity. In situations in which opportunism is on the ascent within proletarian organisations, opportunism tends to downplay the divergences, either claiming them to be 'misunderstandings', as Bernsteinian revisionism did, or else systematically adopting the political positions of one's opponents, as in the early days of the Stalinist current.

"Where opportunism is on the defensive, as in 1903 in Russia or in the history of the ICC, it reacts hysterically to being in the minority, declaring war on the statutes and presenting itself as the victim of repression in order to avoid the debate. The two main characteristics of opportunism in such a situation are, as Lenin pointed out, the sabotage of the work of the organisation, and the staging of scenes and scandals.

"Opportunism is inherently incapable of the serene approach of theoretical clarification and patient persuasion which characterised the internationalist minorities during World War I, Lenin's attitude in 1917, or that of the Italian Fraction in the 30s and the French Fraction thereafter. (...)

"The present clan is a caricature of this approach. As long as it felt itself in control, it tried to play down the divergences emerging in RI, while concentrating on discrediting those who voiced disagreements. As soon as the debate began to develop a theoretical dimension, the attempt was made to prematurely close it. As soon as the clan felt itself in a minority,¹⁴ and even before the debate could develop, questions (...) were inflated into programmatic divergences justifying the systematic rejection of the statutes" (Conference Resolution on activities, point 10).

The conference also considered the ideological weight of capitalism's decomposition on the working class:

"One of the principle characteristics of the phase of decomposition is that the stalemate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat imposes on society a painful and protracted agony. As a result, the process of the development of the class struggle, of the maturation of consciousness, and of the construction of the organisation becomes much slower, more torturous and contradictory. The consequence of this is a tendency towards the gradual

erosion of political clarity, militant conviction and organisational loyalty, the principle counter weights to the political and personal weaknesses of each militant (?)

"Because the victims of such a dynamic have begun to share in the lack of any perspective which today is the lot of decomposing bourgeois society, they are condemned to manifest, more than any other clan in the past, an irrational immediatism, a feverish impatience, an absence of reflection, and the radical loss of theoretical capacities - in fact all the main aspects of decomposition" (idem, point 6).

The conference also pointed out that one of the underlying causes both for the IS' and the whole organisation's initial incorrect positions on the question of functioning, and the anti-organisational turn taken by the members of the "fraction" and the time that the ICC as a whole took to identify this turn, is the result of the weight of democratism in our ranks. It consequently decided to open a discussion on the question of democratism, on the basis of an orientation text to be drawn up by the ICC's central organ.

Finally, the conference insisted on the importance of the struggle under way in the organisation:

"The combat of revolutionaries is a constant battle on two fronts: for the defence and construction of the organisation, and the intervention towards the class as a whole. All the aspects of this work mutually depend on each other (?)

"At the centre of the present combat is the defence of the capacity of the generation of revolutionaries which emerged after 1968 to pass on the mastery of the marxist method, the revolutionary passion and devotion, and the experience of decades of class struggle and organisational combat to a new generation. It is thus essentially the same combat being waged within the ICC and towards the outside, towards the searching elements secreted by the proletariat, in the preparation of the future class party" (idem, point 20).

ICC

NOTES

1 *The Alliance for Socialist Democracy and the International Workingmen's Association, a report on the Alliance drawn up by Marx, Engels, Lafargue and other militants, on a mandate from the IWA's Hague Congress.*

2 *The reactions to these threats are significant: "Ranvier protests at the threat to leave the hall on the part of Splingard, Guillaume and others, who thereby only prove that it is THEY and not us who have taken position IN ADVANCE on the questions under discussion". "Morago [a member of the Alliance] speaks of the tyranny of the Council, but is it not Morago himself who wants to impose the tyranny of his mandate on the Congress?" (intervention by Lafargue).*

3 *"Alerini thinks that the Commission only has a moral conviction, and no material proof; he belonged to the Alliance, and is proud of it (?) you are the Holy Inquisition; we demand a public enquiry with conclusive and tangible proof".*

4 *See the articles, "Crisis in the revolutionary movement", "Report on the structure and functioning of the revolutionary organisation", and the "Presentation of the ICC's 5th Congress", in International Review n°28, 33, and 35 respectively.*

5 "The 11th Congress of the ICC: the struggle for the defence and construction of the organisation".

6 This is the case with the "Cercle de Paris", formed at the end of the 1990s by ex-militants of the ICC close to Simon (an adventurist element excluded from the ICC in 1995), which has published a pamphlet entitled "Que ne pas faire?" ("What is not to be done?"), consisting of a slew of slanders against our organisation, depicted as a Stalinist sect.

7 In other words, the permanent commission of the ICC's central organ, the International Bureau, which is made up of militants from all the territorial sections.

8 In other words, he adopted the same attitude as James Guillaume before the IWA's Hague Congress.

9 This attitude of intimidating an Information Commission is not new either: Utin, who had testified to the Hague Congress' Enquiry Commission on Bakunin's behaviour, was physically attacked by one of Bakunin's supporters.

10 In a circular to all the sections in November 2001, the International Bureau listed these violations of our statutes. Here is a short extract from the list:

- *"leaking information on internal questions (...)*
- *refusal by three members of the central organs to take part in meetings where their attendance is required by the statutes (...);*
- *mailing a bulletin to comrades' home addresses, in total violation of our centralised rules of functioning and in violation of our statutes;*
- *refusal to pay their dues at the normal rate decided by the ICC [the members of the "fraction" had decided unilaterally to pay only 30% of their dues];*
- *refusal to make known to the central organs the content of a supposed 'History of the IS', which has circulated among certain militants and which contains absolutely intolerable attacks against the organisation and some of its militants;*
- *blackmail by threatening to publish, outside the organisation, internal documents of the organisation and notably of its central organs".*

11 See the "Communiqué to our readers" published in *World Revolution* n°252

12 Just as the Bakuninists denounced the decision of the Hague Congress as a trick to prevent them from putting forward their positions, the Jonas camarilla denounced the ICC's taking note of their desertion as an exclusion in disguise aimed at silencing their disagreements.

13 For example, the "fraction" is now trying to set the groups of the proletarian milieu against each other, and to accentuate their divisions. In the same way, in its Bulletin n°11 it has launched a campaign of seduction and flattery towards elements of the parasitic milieu, like those of the "Cercle de Paris" which the "fraction's" members were not backward in condemning in the past. Once again, they adopt the same attitude of the thoroughly "anti-authoritarian" Bakuninists who allied themselves, after the Hague Congress with the "statist" Lassalleans.

14 Jonas expressed his view of the crisis as follows: "*Now that we're no longer in the driver's seat, the ICC is screwed*".

The police-like methods of the 'IFICC'

The parasitic group which calls itself the 'Internal Fraction of the ICC', formed around the individual Jonas who was expelled from the ICC for behaviour unworthy of a communist militant (see our communique in WR 252), is now openly revealing its true nature. The method of informers

On its website, the IFICC has published two texts which tell us a great deal about the destructive activities of this so-called 'Fraction'.

The first text is the letter which the ICC's section in Mexico sent to the four members of the 'Fraction' living in that country. The publication of the content of this letter is not a problem for us. But what is a problem for us (and should be for all the groups of the communist left) is the fact that the IFICC has published in advance the date of an internal meeting of the ICC (the territorial conference of our Mexican section). In this letter, the ICC's section in Mexico gave the members of the 'Fraction' the date of this conference in order to allow them to defend themselves at it and make an appeal to it (which they have refused to do).

By publishing the whole of this letter on its website, the clique around Jonas deliberately put at the disposal of all the world's cops the date on which our conference in Mexico was being held, with the participation of militants from other countries (since as our press has always noted, international delegations always take part in these kind of meetings). This meant that the police organs concerned with such matters could strengthen their surveillance at the airports and borders. This disgraceful action by the IFICC, which facilitates the work of the repressive forces of the bourgeois state against revolutionary militants, is all the more shameful in that the members of the IFICC know perfectly well that certain of our comrades have already, in the past, been direct victims of repression and in some cases have had to flee their country of origin (note 1).

But the police-like methods of this parasitic group don't stop there.

In number 14 of the 'Internal Bulletin' of the IFICC, published on its website, our readers can also find a text entitled 'Une ultime mise au point' which has the pretension (and above all the hypocrisy) to try to defend the PCI (Le Proletaire) against the "incredible attack" supposedly launched against this group by the ICC. In fact, our readers can see for themselves that this text is not at all a defence of the PCI, given the total absence of arguments to refute the elements we have published in our press about this incident (see WRs 260 and 261).

The IFICC's text is really devoted to hurling the worst kind of slanders against two of our comrades (and thus against all the militants of the ICC, who are accused of being in

the pocket of "the person who runs the ICC" and his partner, about whom Jonas spread the rumour in the ICC that she was a "cop"). In doing so it exposes the abject methods of the friends of Jonas.

The real "political disagreements" of the friends of Jonas

In this 'Ultime mise au point', the IFICC begins by asserting that "we have always remained on a strictly political terrain". Our readers can make up their own minds about this by examining the IFICC's 'political' arguments aimed at showing its 'fundamental disagreements' with the ICC, disagreements which are supposed to justify the formation of an 'Internal Fraction' in continuity with all the left fractions of the workers' movement from the Spartacus League to the Italian left. Here we will only cite one small extract from these arguments. Readers can judge whether they prove that the IFICC has always remained "on a strictly political terrain":

"This text is written by CG, alias Peter, as can be seen from the style and above all the somewhat fantastical reference to a lamentable operation of recuperation carried out under his direction. This same Peter is the person who runs the ICC and who, after having excluded or pushed out the majority of the founding members of the ICC, claims to be the sole heir of MC. But it should also be known that if Peter is leading this hate-filled cabal against our comrade Jonas, it's for the very simple reason that Louise (alias Avril), the militant about whom Jonas has clearly expressed his doubts, is none other than the partner of the chief" (note 2).

On the fallacious pretext of taking up the defence of the PCI, the Jonas camarilla is exposing the real colour of its money and the "strictly political" disagreements upon which this so-called Fraction has been founded: the ICC is led by a little Stalin ("the chief") manipulated by "the chief's partner" who is a dubious element (a "cop", to use Jonas' term).

As we have already underlined in an article in WR 252 ('The struggle of revolutionary organisations against provocation and slander'), the workers' movement has always insisted that introducing suspicion into an organisation in order to destroy confidence between militants is precisely the method used by agents provocateurs (notably the GPU in the Trotskyist movement in the 1930s).

Today through this 'Ultime mise au point' the Jonas camarilla is carrying on outside the ICC the dirty work it did inside it, with the aim of sowing suspicion throughout the proletarian political milieu. It is clear that, having failed to convince the militants of the ICC of the necessity to exclude the "chief" and the "chief's partner", this parasitic grouplet is now trying to draw other groups of the communist left behind its slanders in order to erect a cordon sanitaire around the ICC and to discredit it (as can already be seen from reading the press of the PCI).

The method of blackmailers

But the IFICC shows the police-like nature of its activities most clearly by its insistence on the initials of the "chief" ("this text is written by CG, alias Peter"). What "strictly political" interest do Jonas and his friends have in putting the initials of a militant in public? Apart from the fact that this really is worthy of an informer, in the same way as publishing the date of our territorial conference in Mexico, this is also the method of blackmailers, aimed at intimidating militants. By publishing on the internet the real initials of one of our comrades (when will they include the complete name and address?), Jonas and his pals are trying to deliver the following message: whoever dares to support the ICC will be denounced to the police. This is one of the main reasons why the address list of militants and subscribers was stolen from the ICC several months before the formation of the IFICC: apart from the fact that this theft allowed them to inundate our militants and subscribers with its squalid denigrations of the ICC, it also allows the IFICC to permanently intimidate them. How else can we explain the fact that the IFICC, even though its bulletins are now on the internet, continues to send its bulletins by post, including to those who have explicitly asked the IFICC to stop sending them? (note 3).

Furthermore, what political interest does the IFICC have in shouting from the rooftops that "this text is written by CG, alias Peter, as can be seen from its style"? From the proletarian point of view, what interests the serious reader is above all the political content of our articles and not which individual is behind such and such a signature or such and such a "style". On the other hand, it is true that thanks to the analysis of "style", the bourgeois state's repressive forces can indeed try to identify those who write for the revolutionary press (even if, as is the case with the ICC, the articles published in our press are discussed and edited collectively). This enables the bourgeoisie, in periods of repression, to try to paralyse the publication of the revolutionary press by arresting and imprisoning militants whose "style" they have, or believe to have, recognised.

With such methods, worthy of the work of police spies, this 'final' *mise au point* is in fact a 'final' threat: if the ICC continues to warn the proletarian milieu against the manoeuvres of Jonas and his friends (as we did in our article in reply to the PCI), the IFICC will publish the famous 'documents' which purport to prove that the "chief's partner" is a dubious element, with the aim of convincing the proletarian milieu about this. As the IFICC's article says "Comrade Jonas is by no means the only one to have reasons for doubting this militant: here again numerous documents written by the ICC, which we have in our possession, prove this".

We are only too familiar with this threat. The IFICC is now carrying on outside the ICC the same blackmail which it carried on for a year and a half inside the ICC in order to try to force us to accept its permanent violation of our statutes and the thuggish behaviour of the members of the 'Fraction' (theft of the ICC's documents and money, slanders against militants spread through secret correspondence and meetings, etc).

This method of blackmail and insinuation, of spreading calumnies against two of our comrades, of proclaiming loud and clear that "once again we have the documents which

prove what we are saying" is not new from the IFICC. When its members were still in the ICC they behaved in the same way with regard to a document called 'The history of the IS' ((International Secretariat, permanent commission of the ICC's central organ). They circulated this in a selective manner and presented it as the proof of their accusations against certain of our comrades, particularly Louise and Peter. Despite the importance which they attributed to this document (which they described as "historic"), they always refused to place it in the hands of the organisation, including those of the Investigation Commission nominated by the 14th Congress of the ICC to shed light on these problems. Finally, this document was published in no. 10 of the IFICC Bulletin, after its members had deliberately placed themselves outside the organisation. At the express request of the central organ of the ICC, it was read by all our comrades who read the French language. All the sections and all the comrades were nauseated by the avalanche of lies contained in this document, as well as by the repulsive way it made use of comrades' private lives.

This is the kind of document that the IFICC is threatening to make public!

The organisations of the workers' movement have often been confronted by this kind of blackmail: "We have the documents which prove our accusations". Faced with these methods, the attitude of proletarian organisations has always been to demand the publication of these famous documents so that they can be publicly refuted. As for those which the IFICC goes on about, it's clear that the ICC is perfectly capable of refuting them as well. However, these documents deal with the details of the functioning of our organisation and the private life of its militants, and their publication could only be a gift to the police. This said, the ICC is perfectly willing for this document to be made available to a commission made up of trusted militants of the organisations of the communist left and to be discussed in this framework.

The ICC has **nothing** to fear from the truth because the truth can only

- demonstrate the fact that our organisation, both at the level of its positions and of its principles of functioning, remains totally loyal to its past experience as well to the experience of the communist left;
- reveal the consciously destructive and anti-proletarian character of Jonas and his supporters, as the publication of no. 14 and in particular the text 'Ultime mise au point' have once again shown.

ICC, February 2003.

(1) We often read or hear that the special organs of the bourgeois state have no interest in a small organisation like ours and that today the ruling class is unaware of the role that the communist left is destined to play in a future revolutionary movement. Such ideas express an enormous naivete, as can be seen for example by the 'anti-revisionist' campaigns which aimed to put into the same bag the groups of the left communist current who denounced anti-fascism and the extreme anti-semitic right. The whole history of the workers' movement attests to the fact that the special services of the bourgeois state never underestimate the potential danger represented by revolutionary

groups, however small they might be, however little influence they may have in the working class at a given moment. Furthermore, despite the fact that for the moment the 'democratic' state does not generally use open repression against the groups of the communist left, the latter have already suffered from acts of repression (such as the raids on the PCI in the 1970s). The ICC itself has not been spared since certain of our militants, including in the most 'democratic' countries, have been subjected to raids, surveillance aimed at intimidation, prolonged interrogation at the frontier, and commando actions by armed elements probably mixed up with the state. The members of the IFICC know this perfectly well.

(2) MC is our comrade Mark Chirik, who died in 1990. He lived through the revolution of 1917 in his native town of Kishinev in Moldavia. A member of the Communist Party of Palestine at the age of 13, expelled from the PCF in 1928, he carried on the struggle for the defence of revolutionary positions in different organisations of the communist left, notably the Italian Fraction which he joined in 1938 and the Gauche Communiste de France from 1945 onwards. From 1964 in Venezuela and 1968 in France, MC played a decisive role in the formation of the first groups who were to be at the origins of the ICC, giving the political and organisational experience he had acquired in the various communist organisations he had belonged to. You can find out more about the political biography of our comrade in our French-language pamphlet *The Communist Left of France* and in the articles in *International Review* 65 and 66, written at the time of his death. As for the ridiculous claim that Peter aims to be the "sole heir of MC" (completed by a note exclaiming "this shows the conception he has of the revolutionary organisation"), the members of the IFICC will have a hard time proving it. This shows the sick imagination and stupid spite of the members of the IFICC, as well as their own warped view of the organisation.

(3) In its Bulletin no. 11, the IFICC published a reply to a letter that we sent to each of its members asking them to return the internal documents in their possession. In its reply, the IFICC writes: "As for the copy of the subscribers' list, it is to say the least striking that you are claiming, like a shopkeeper jealous of his clients, a 'property' of people". But perhaps your concern is the security of these documents which could fall into 'indelicate' hands? We can assure you that they are being well looked after, and it will be difficult, not to say impossible, for 'indelicate people' to get their hands on them". After the IFICC's recent informer-like behaviour, we have an idea of how much confidence we can place in them!

Communiqué to our readers: The ICC under attack from a new agency of the bourgeois state

In October 2013, a new 'political group' was born and gave itself the pompous name of 'International Group of the Communist Left' (IGCL). This new group doesn't tell us much about its identity: it is in fact made up of the fusion between two elements of the group Klabatalo in Montreal and elements from the so-called 'Internal Fraction' of the ICC (IFICC), who were excluded from the ICC in 2003 for behaviour unworthy of communist militants: as well as robbery, slander, and blackmail, these elements crossed the Rubicon with their deliberate behaviour as snitches, in particular by publishing in advance, on the internet, the date the conference of our section in Mexico and plastering up the real initials of one of our comrades, presented as the 'leader of the ICC'. We refer our readers who are unaware of this to the articles published in our press at the time¹.

In one of these articles, 'The police-like methods of the IFICC', we clearly showed that these elements were freely offering their good and loyal services to the bourgeois state. They spend the greater part of their time assiduously surveying the ICC's website, trying to inform themselves about everything going on in our organisation, nourishing themselves with and spreading the most nauseating gossip dragged up from the sewers (especially about the couple Louise and Peter, two ICC militants, who have obsessed and excited them to the highest degree for more than 10 years!). Shortly after this article, they further aggravated their case by publishing a document of 114 pages, reproducing numerous extracts from the meetings of our international central organ, supposedly to demonstrate the truth of their accusations against the ICC. What this document really demonstrates is that these elements have a sickness of the mind, that they are totally blinded by hatred towards our organisation, and that they are consciously handing over to the police information that can only help them with their work.

Hardly was it born that this new abortion named the 'International Group of the Communist Left' uttered its first cry by unleashing some hysterical propaganda against the ICC, as we can see from the title page of their website: 'A new (final?) internal crisis of the ICC!', accompanied by an 'Appeal to the proletarian camp and the militants of the ICC'.

For several days, this 'international group' made up of four individuals has been carrying out a frenzied activity, addressing letter after letter to the whole 'proletarian milieu', as well as to our militants and some of our sympathisers (those whose addresses they have got hold of) in order to save them from the claws of a so-called 'liquidationist faction' (a clan made up of Louise, Peter and Baruch).

The founding members of this new group, the two snitches of the ex-IFICC, have just taken a new step into ignominy by clearly revealing their police methods aimed at the destruction of the ICC. The so-called IGCL is ringing the alarm bells and crying at the top of its voice that it is in possession of the internal bulletins of the ICC. By showing off their war trophy and making such a racket, the message that these out and out informers want to get across is very clear: there is a 'mole' in the ICC who is working hand in hand with the ex-IFICC! This is clearly police work which has no other aim than to sow generalised suspicion, trouble and ill-feeling in our organisation. These are the same methods that were used by the GPU, Stalin's political police, to destroy the Trotskyist movement from the inside during the 1930s. These are the same methods that the members of the ex-IFICC have already used (notably two of them, Juan and Jonas, founding members of the IGCL) when they made special trips to several sections of the ICC to organise secret meetings and circulate rumours that one of our comrades (the "wife of the ICC's chief", as they put it) is a "cop". Today, it's the same procedure to try to sow panic and destroy the ICC from the inside, but it's even more abject: under the hypocritical pretext of wanting to "hold out a hand" to the militants of the ICC and save them from "demoralisation", these professional telltales are really addressing the following message to all the militants of the ICC: "there is one (or several) traitors among you who are giving us your internal bulletins, but we won't give you their name because it's up to you to look for them!". This is the terrible objective of all the feverish agitation of this new 'international group': to once again introduce the poison of suspicion and distrust within the ICC in order to undermine it from within. This is a real enterprise of destruction which is no less perverse than the methods of Stalin's political police or of the Stasi.

As we have recalled several times in our press, Victor Serge, in his well-known book which is a reference point for the workers' movement, *What every revolutionary should know about repression*, makes it clear that spreading suspicion and slander is the favourite weapon of the bourgeois state for destroying revolutionary organisations:

"confidence in the party is the cement of all revolutionary forces....the enemies of action, the cowards, the well-entrenched ones, the opportunists, are happy to assemble their arsenal – in the sewers! Suspicion and slander are their weapons for discrediting revolutionaries...This evil of suspicion and mistrust among us can only be reduced and isolated by a great effort of will. It is necessary, as the condition of any real struggle against provocation - and slanderous accusation of members is playing the game of provocation - that no-one should be accused lightly, and it should also be impossible for an accusation against a revolutionary to be accepted without being investigated. Each time that the least suspicion is aroused, a jury of comrades must pronounce and rule on the accusation or on the slander. Simple rules to observe with an inflexible rigour if one wants to preserve the moral health of revolutionary organisations"

The ICC is the only revolutionary organisation which has remained faithful to this tradition of the workers' movement by defending the principle of Juries of Honour in the

face of slander: only adventurers, dubious elements and cowards would refuse to render things clear in front of a Jury of Honour².

Victor Serge also insists that the motives which lead certain revolutionaries to offer their services to the repressive forces of the bourgeois state don't always come from material misery or cowardice:

“there are, much more dangerously, those dilettantes and adventurers who believe in nothing, indifferent to the ideal they have been serving, taken by the idea of danger, intrigue, conspiracy, a complicated game in which they can make fools of everyone. They may have talent, their role may be almost undetectable”

And as part of this profile of informers or agents provocateurs, you will find, according to Serge, ex-militants “wounded by the party”. Simple hurt pride, personal resentments (jealousy, frustration, disappointment...) can lead militants to develop an uncontrollable hatred towards the party (or against certain of its militants who they see as rivals) and so offer their services to the bourgeois state.

All the ringing ‘Appeals’ of this stuck-up agency of the bourgeois state which is the IGCL are nothing but calls for a pogrom against certain of our comrades (and we have already denounced in our press the threats made by a member of the ex-IFICC who said to one of our militants , “You, I will cut your throat!”). It's no accident that this new ‘Appeal’ by the snitches of the IFICC was immediately relayed by one of their friends and accomplices, a certain Pierre Hempel, who publishes a ‘blog’ as indigestible as it is delirious, ‘Le Proletariat Universel’, in which you can read stuff like “Peter and his floozy” (*cf note below). The “floozy” in question being none other than our comrade who has been harassed for over ten years by the snitches and potential killers of the ex-IFICC and their accomplices. This is the very ‘proletarian’ literature that circulates the ‘Appeal’ of the ‘IGCL’ which will pique the curiosity and voyeurism of the so-called ‘proletarian’ milieu. You get the friends you deserve.

But that's not all. If you click on the links on the note below³, our readers who really do belong to the camp of the communist left can get a more precise idea of the pedigree of this new ‘International Group of the Communist left’: it has been sponsored for several years by a tendency within another office of the bourgeois state, the NPA (the ‘New Anticapitalist Party’ of Olivier Besancenot which stands at elections and is regularly invited to appear on the TV). This tendency in the NPA often makes loud publicity for the IGCL, putting it on the front page of its internet site! If a group of the extreme left of capital makes so much publicity for the IFICC and its new disguise as the IGCL, this is proof that the bourgeoisie recognises one of its faithful servants: it knows it can count on it to try to destroy the ICC. Thus the snitches of the IGCL would have every right to claim a decoration from the state (obviously from the hands of the Interior Minister), since they have rendered much more eminent services to it than most of those who have been graced with medals by the state.

The ICC will cast as much clarity as possible on all this and inform its readers about the follow-up to this affair. It is quite possible that we have been infiltrated by one (or several) dubious elements. It wouldn't be for the first time and we have had a long experience of this type of problem going back as least as far as the Chenier affair. Chenier was an element excluded from the ICC in 1981 and a few months later was seen officially working for the Socialist party which was in government at the time. If this is the case then obviously we will apply our statutes as we have always done in the past.

But we can't rule out another hypothesis: that one of our computers has been hacked by the services of the police (who have been surveying our activities for over 40 years). And it's not impossible that it was the police itself (by passing themselves off as a 'mole', an anonymous ICC militant) which transmitted to the IFICC certain of our internal bulletins knowing quite well that these snitches (and especially the two founding members of the IGCL) would immediately put them to good use. This would not be at all surprising since the IFICC cowboys (who always shoot faster than their own shadows) have done the same thing before, in 2004, when they flirted with an 'unknown' element from a Stalinist agency in Argentina, the 'Citizen B' who hid himself behind a so-called 'Circulo de Comunistas Internacionalistas'. This purely fictitious 'Circulo' had the great merit of publishing gross and ignoble lies against our organisation, lies which were complacently relayed by the IFICC. As soon as these lies were exposed, 'Citizen B' vanished, leaving the IFICC in consternation and disarray.

The IFICC/IGCL claims that *"the proletariat needs its political organisations more than ever to orient it towards the proletarian revolution. A weakening of the ICC still means a weakening of the whole proletarian camp. And a weakening of the proletarian camp necessarily implies a weakening of the proletariat in the class struggle"*. This is the most disgusting hypocrisy. The Stalinist parties declare themselves to be the defenders of the communist revolution when they are in fact its fiercest enemies. No one should be taken in: whatever the scenario – the presence in our ranks of a 'mole' of the IFICC or manipulation by the official forces of the state - this latest 'coup' by the IFICC/IGCL clearly shows that its vocation is in no way to defend the positions of the communist left and work towards the proletarian revolution but to destroy the main organisation of the communist left today. This is a police agency of the capitalist state, whether it gets paid or not.

The ICC has always defended itself against the attacks of its enemies, notably against those who want to destroy it through campaigns of lies and slander. This time it will do the same. It will be neither destabilised or intimidated by this attack by the class enemy. All the proletarian organisations of the past have had to face up to attacks from the bourgeois state aimed at destroying them. They defended themselves ferociously and these attacks, far from weakening them, on the contrary strengthened their unity and the solidarity between militants. This is how the ICC and its militants have always reacted to the attacks and informing of the IFICC. Thus, as soon as the ignoble appeal of the IGCL was known about, all the sections and militants of the ICC immediately

mobilised themselves to defend, with the utmost determination, our organisation and the comrades targeted in this 'Appeal'.

International Communist Current. 4.5.14

1 The police-like methods of the 'FICC'; The ICC doesn't allow snitches into its public meetings ; Calomnie et mouchardage, les deux mamelles de la politique de la FICCI envers le CCI.

2 See in particular our communiqué of 21 February 2002, Revolutionary organisations struggle against provocation and slander

3 <http://tendanceclaire.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=655>

<http://tendanceclaire.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=2058>

<http://tendanceclaire.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=7197>

(*) We should point out that this sinister buffoon does not hesitate to write in his blog that "*If the police had sent me such a document [ie the ICC's internal bulletins], I would have thanked them in the name of the proletariat*". No comment.

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The ICC has always defended itself against the attacks of its enemies, notably against those who want to destroy it through campaigns of lies and slander. This time it will do the same. It will be neither destabilised or intimidated by this attack by the class enemy. All the proletarian organisations of the past have had to face up to attacks from the bourgeois state aimed at destroying them. They defended themselves ferociously and these attacks, far from weakening them, on the contrary strengthened their unity and the solidarity between militants. This is how the ICC and its militants have always reacted to the attacks and informing of the IFICC. Thus, as soon as the ignoble appeal of the IGCL was known about, all the sections and militants of the ICC immediately

mobilised themselves to defend, with the utmost determination, our organisation and the comrades targeted in this 'Appeal'.

International Communist Current. 4.5.14

1 □ The police-like methods of the 'FICC'; The ICC doesn't allow snitches into its public meetings ; Calomnie et mouchardage, les deux mamelles de la politique de la FICCI envers le CCI.

2 □ See in particular our communiqué of 21 February 2002, Revolutionary organisations struggle against provocation and slander

3 <http://tendanceclaire.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=655>

<http://tendanceclaire.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=2058>

<http://tendanceclaire.npa.free.fr/breve.php?id=7197>

(*) We should point out that this sinister buffoon does not hesitate to write in his blog that "*If the police had sent me such a document [ie the ICC's internal bulletins], I would have thanked them in the name of the proletariat*". No comment.

Doctor Bourrinet, fraud and self-proclaimed historian



On 8th November 2014, a conference was held in Marseille on the subject of "The radical left of the 1920s, internationalism and proletarian autonomy".

Before we give an account of the meeting itself, we aim to provide our readers with some background information on the conference speaker, Philippe Bourrinet, presented in the publicity as "*the author of various articles and books on the revolutionary workers' movement and a member of the Smolny press collective*".¹ Otherwise, it would be impossible to understand either Philippe Bourrinet's presentation or the discussion that followed.

One might paraphrase Marx's famous polemic against Proudhon² as follows:

"Philippe Bourrinet has the misfortune of being peculiarly misunderstood. Among those who are interested in or claim to belong to the Communist Left, he passes for a serious and honest historian. Among historians, he passes for a defender of the Communist Left's ideas and a connoisseur of its main organisation, the ICC, since everybody knows that he was a militant of the ICC for more than fifteen years. As militants of the ICC, and therefore attached to a serious and honest understanding of history (though we do not claim to be historians), we desire to protest against this double error".

As a foreword to our protest against the ignorance of which Philippe Bourrinet is a victim, let us revisit a few episodes of his political career, since this will allow us to refute many of the false ideas about him which are in circulation these days.

Philippe Bourrinet as a militant of the ICC

After a short stay in the ranks of the Trotskyist organisation *Lutte Ouvrière*, at the beginning of the 1970s Philippe Bourrinet entered the *Révolution internationale* group, shortly thereafter to become the section in France of the ICC. Since he had a ready pen and extensive knowledge, he was soon given the responsibility of writing articles for the organisation, under the name of Chardin. He also entered the ICC's central organ

shortly after its creation in 1975, one of the reasons for this nomination being his linguistic ability, notably in German.

Philippe Bourrinet had begun his studies in history, and it was agreed between him and the ICC that he should devote his Master's dissertation to a study of the Italian Communist Left, so that this could be published by our organisation as a pamphlet. He received the fullest support for this work, which of course benefited his own university career, from our organisation: not only material support but also political support, since our comrade Marc Chirik,³ who had been a member of the Italian Left, provided him with an extensive documentation and first-hand information, as well as precious advice. As planned, his dissertation was published shortly afterwards by our organisation, in book format. Considered as a work of the ICC, and putting forward the ICC's analyses, it was unsigned, like all our pamphlets.

After the book was published, we encouraged Philippe Bourrinet to undertake a similar study of the Dutch-German Communist Left for his doctoral thesis. The first chapters were published in issues 45, 50, and 52 of the ICC's *International Review*. Once again, Philippe Bourrinet benefited from the ICC's complete political and material support.⁴ He submitted his thesis in March 1988, and we then began the long work on the book's layout, delivering it to the printers in November 1990; Philippe Bourrinet had left the ICC a few months beforehand. He gave no political reasons for his resignation, saying only that he no longer wanted to be a militant.

Philippe Bourrinet, member of the "Société des Gens des Lettres"

Two years later, we received in our PO Box, without the slightest accompanying letter, a copy of two surprising documents. The first, dated 21/08/1992, was the "Receipt for the submission by Philippe Bourrinet of a manuscript entitled *The Dutch Communist Left 1907-1950*". This receipt was issued by the copyright department of the Société des Gens des Lettres.⁵ The second document, dated 27th July 1992, was even more surprising. It was a typewritten text titled "Concerning the anonymous publications distributed by the International Communist Current group (ICC) in France and elsewhere".

In this document, we read that "*The book titled THE DUTCH LEFT, signed 'International Communist Current', printed in November 1990 by the 'Litografia Libero Nicola, Napoli' and distributed in France and Belgium, was entirely written by Philippe BOURRINET, doctor at the University of Paris 1 – Sorbonne (22nd March 1988)*". This was perfectly true. But there followed a series of allegations, accusing the ICC of "piracy", which we desired to clarify with Philippe Bourrinet. Accordingly, a delegation from the ICC met him in a café on the Place de Clichy in Paris, close to where he lived at the time. This delegation pointed out to Philippe Bourrinet the truth of the matter, none of which he attempted to contradict. The delegation asked him why, all of a sudden, he was making such a fuss about his name not appearing on the book on the Dutch Left, since he had never before made this demand. He replied that it would be useful for him to appear as

the book's author in view of an upcoming job application, and that he wanted his name to figure on future editions. Although in his statement, Philippe Bourrinet had made a series of outrageous attacks against the ICC, we decided not to hold it against him: we did not, for example, put anything in the way of his professional ambitions. We decided to accede to his demand, but since the French edition had already been printed we told him that it was too late for this version of the book, on which he agreed. We therefore undertook to publish in any future edition, the following brief statement: *"This book, which first appeared in French in 1990, is published under the responsibility of the ICC. It was written by Philippe Bourrinet in the context of his work for his university doctorate, but it was prepared and discussed by the ICC when the author was one of its militants. For this reason it was conceived and published as the collective work of the ICC, without an author's signature and with his total agreement."*

Philippe Bourrinet has not been in the ICC since April 1990, and he has since published editions of this book under his own name, with the addition of certain 'corrections' linked to the evolution of his political positions.

*For its part, the ICC fully intends to continue its policy of publishing this book. It should be clear that our organization cannot be held responsible for any additional or divergent political positions that Philippe Bourrinet might integrate into the editions produced under his own responsibility."*⁶

Philippe Bourrinet accepted this proposal.

For the ICC, the matter was closed and we no longer paid much attention to the career of Doctor Bourrinet.⁷ Our inattention was all the greater in that his later literary efforts were of incomparably lesser quality and interest than the two books on the Italian and Dutch-German Lefts. We did of course notice, on the Internet, that Doctor Bourrinet had republished the two documents, with a few modifications of the ICC's original which brought the text closer to the positions of councilism. It turned out that in the Postface to the new edition of the Dutch-German Left, Doctor Bourrinet wrote: *"The present edition contains defects inevitable in a work carried out within the university framework. There also appears the author's membership of the aforementioned group [the ICC], in the form of traces of ideology at a remove from a rigorous marxist analysis of the revolutionary movement and theory (...) I have tried as far as possible to remove or diminish the passages which contained too much 'anti-councilist' polemic, specific to the group whose influence I was under at the time"*.

In this passage, we learn several things. First, that Doctor Bourrinet had to leave the ICC to acquire at long last *"a rigorous marxist analysis of the revolutionary movement and theory"*. He forgets to mention that it was the *Révolution Internationale* group (the future ICC section in France) which taught him the basics of marxism, when he had just left *Lutte Ouvrière*, a group which – whatever its claims to the contrary – has nothing to do with either marxism or the revolutionary movement. He also accredits the idea – so popular with university "marxism" – that one can remain a "marxist" while

avoiding any form of political organisation fighting for the defence of proletarian principles. This idea is very close to degenerate councilism's rejection of the need for such an organisation – which explains why so many "marxist professors" have such an affinity with councilism. We could answer Doctor Bourrinet's viewpoint with these words of the ICC militant... Philippe Bourrinet: "*Unlike the Otto Rühle variety of 'councilism' in the 1920s, or the Dutch variety in the 1930s, today's councilist current has broken with the 'council communist' tradition of the Communist Left. It corresponds much more to the revolt of fractions of the petty bourgeoisie or of proletarian elements suspicious of any political organisation. The councilist danger of tomorrow will not appear with the defeat of the revolution, as was the case during the 1920s in Germany, it will appear at the beginning of the revolutionary wave and will be the negative moment of the proletariat's coming to consciousness*" (from the Proceedings of a study day on the danger of councilism, held by the ICC's section in France in April 1985, p19).

"*Workerism co-exists only too well, one can even say perfectly, with intellectualism. In this sense, we have seen a kind of petty-bourgeois anarchism, in the sense of the rejection of any form of authority or organisation, etc, etc; similar to the vision of the workerist intellectual already condemned by Lenin in **What is to be done?**"* (ibid., p32).

And finally, we learn that at the time, the militant Philippe Bourrinet made these mistakes because he was "under the influence". Doctor Bourrinet, just for once you are far too modest!⁸ The militant Philippe Bourrinet was not "under the influence" of the ICC's positions, on the contrary he was their determined and talented defender in the organisation's struggle against the tendencies towards councilist positions in its midst. This is precisely why the ICC entrusted him with the article that took up the cudgels publicly against these tendencies (See *International Review* no.40, "The function of revolutionary organizations: The danger of councilism").

Having revised the two texts on the Italian Left and the Dutch-German Left, Doctor Bourrinet had new editions printed, which he put on sale on the Internet. These texts obviously had slightly more content and slightly fewer errors than those published by the ICC. Amongst other things, they expressed the good Doctor's new theoretical line. And these changes were of considerable value: whereas the ICC sold its book on the Dutch-German Left for 12 euros, the good Doctor's price was 75€. Similarly for the Italian Left, the price was not 8€ but 50€ (40€ for the English edition).⁹ Of course, the good Doctor's editions had colour covers! In a famous letter of 18th March 1872 to the French publisher of *Capital*, Marx wrote "*I welcome your idea of publishing the translation of **Das Kapital** as a periodical. In this format it will be more accessible to the working class, and for me this consideration overrides all others*". Clearly, this is not the kind of consideration that carries much weight with Doctor Bourrinet, whose methods are more like those of the private medical Doctors whose fees are ten times higher than those of the general practitioner, with the added benefit of allowing them to avoid any contact with the sweaty masses.

Is stinginess the explanation for the exorbitant prices of Doctor Bourrinet's works? Not impossible, since the militant Philippe Bourrinet was known for his stinginess in the ICC, and got teased for it by Marc Chirik, at the time the treasurer of the ICC's section in France. That said, it is unlikely that the good Doctor's avarice, however obsessive it might be, has rendered him completely stupid. Even an idiot can see that the Doctor's works are unlikely to find any buyers, even if the ICC were to put an end to its own distribution as the Doctor never stops demanding that we do.¹⁰ More likely, the Doctor's elevated prices are no higher than his elevated esteem for his works and his own good self. To sell his literary production "on the cheap" (and it must be more valuable, in his estimation, than *Capital*), would be to minimise their value, according to the classic and contemptible bourgeois logic which we have already seen in his appeal to the "Société des Gens des Lettres". If our explanation is incorrect, Doctor Bourrinet need only supply his own, which we will gladly publish, as well as any reply he cares to give to this article.

Doctor Bourrinet, liar and slanderer

But all these examples of Doctor Bourrinet's petty-mindedness and bad faith pale into insignificance beside the slander he directed at our organisation in 1992. We did not react publicly at the time; we intend to do so now, because since March 2012 they have been smeared across the Internet. On the site <http://www.left-dis.nl/f/> there is now a title "Une mise au point publique (Paris, décembre 91) sur le parasitisme 'instinctif' de la secte 'CCI'. Mars 2012" ("*Public statement (Paris, December 1991) on the 'instinctive' parasitism of the 'ICC' sect*"). The title links to a PDF¹¹ containing all the above-mentioned documents received by the ICC in 1992, to which we will now return.

In the "Statement" of 27th July 1992, we read:

"On the occasion of the publication of the author's doctoral thesis, and of his previous Master's dissertation on the Italian Communist Left (1926-1945), without the author's agreement, and with arbitrary additions and cuts made by this group, which thinks it owns the document under the pretext that the undersigned author was once a member of the ICC, the following clarification is necessary for the reader:

This work was published anonymously by the ICC in 1991, in French, without the author's agreement and without warning him in advance, and without his corrections. The author was confronted with a fait accompli, a veritable act of 'piracy'.

[There then follows the passage quoted above in which we learn that Philippe Bourrinet is a doctor of the University of Paris 1, and another giving the circumstances in which he submitted his thesis.]

This book is a continuation of that on THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST LEFT 1912-1945, a Master's dissertation by the same author (Paris 1 – Sorbonne, 1980, supervised by Jacques Droz).

This dissertation was published in 1981 and 1984, anonymously – in French and Italian – by the ICC group, with the tacit, and only the tacit, agreement of the author".

Let us begin with "*the tacit, and only the tacit, agreement*" that the militant Philippe Bourrinet gave for the publication of the work on the Italian Communist Left, without mentioning the author's name. What is this can of worms Doctor Bourrinet, you pitiful hypocrite? Did you or did you not agree that the text you wrote should be published as an ICC pamphlet? When you discussed at length with other militants of the organisation, about the layout and the cover for this pamphlet (where indeed, the author's name does not figure), did you do so "tacitly"?

As for the work on the Dutch-German Left, which was supposedly published without the agreement of the shiny new "Doctor" Bourrinet, we're surprised your nose didn't get in the way when you were writing: it must have stuck out further than Pinocchio's! Really Doctor Bourrinet, you are the most arrant liar to pretend that you were confronted with a "*fait accompli*". And here is the proof that you are a liar, in an article published in our *International Review* no.58 (3rd Quarter 1989) and titled "Contribution to a history of the revolutionary movement: Introduction to the Dutch-German Left", where we read: "*The history of the international communist left since the beginning of the century, such as we've begun to relate in our pamphlets on the 'Communist Left of Italy' isn't simply for historians. It's only from a militant standpoint, the standpoint of those who are committed to the workers' struggle for emancipation, that the history of the workers' movement can be approached. And for the working class, this history isn't just a question of knowing things, but first and foremost a weapon in its present and future struggles, because of the lessons from the past that it contains. It's from this militant point of view that we are publishing as a contribution to the history of the revolutionary movement a pamphlet on the German-Dutch communist left which will appear in French later this year. The introduction to this pamphlet, published below, goes into the question of how to approach the history of this current*".

Who then is the slimeball of an ICC militant, justifying in advance the "piracy" of Doctor Bourrinet's thesis, the willing accomplice in a manoeuvre intended to confront the good Doctor with a "*fait accompli*"? The article is signed Ch, alias Chardin, alias... the militant, Philippe Bourrinet.

So here we have the militant Philippe Bourrinet ("under the influence" in all likelihood), who takes responsibility publicly and in writing for the ignominious crime that the ICC is about to commit on poor Doctor Bourrinet. But, at the moment that this article is written, he has already received his doctorate from the University of Paris 1 – Sorbonne. In other words, one of those most responsible for the infamous acts against Doctor Bourrinet, is none other than Doctor Bourrinet himself. Is Doctor Bourrinet a masochist? At all events, he is certainly an out and out liar, of that there is no shadow of a doubt. A contemptible liar and slanderer.

The threats of Doctor Bourrinet the shopkeeper

One might imagine that Doctor Bourrinet could not stoop any lower than he did in March 2012, with this publication of his 20-year old documents: if so, one would be mistaken. At the same time, several militants of the ICC received a registered letter dated 23rd March 2012, from the Legal department of the Société des Gens des Lettres. Here follow the main passages:

"We intervene in the name of Mr Philippe Bourrinet, member of the Société des Gens des Lettres, on the matter of his dissertation and his theses (...)

We are most surprised to discover that these two works are the object of systematic forgery, thus damaging both the property rights and the moral right of Mr Bourrinet.

We therefore ask that you immediately cease all use of these texts, either on the different Internet sites where they may be found, or in printed publications.

If he does not obtain satisfaction, the author reserves the right to take any action he deems appropriate".

In other words, Doctor Bourrinet "*reserves the right*" to set the law on certain ICC militants, should the ICC continue to distribute the books on the Dutch-German and the Italian Left. And the best of it is, that one of the militants targeted by this threatening letter was also one of those who was most involved in giving Doctor Bourrinet material support for his thesis, by using the photocopying services at his job (at the risk of getting into serious trouble with his employer, up to and including the sack), to copy hundreds upon hundreds of pages (drafts of Philippe Bourrinet's work so that it could be proofed by other militants, collections of publications of the Communist Left that had been lent to him, copies of his dissertation and thesis for the University...).

Today, Doctor Bourrinet – with his characteristic cowardice, since he hides behind the Société des Gens des Lettres, who he has got on-board by lying to them – has the ludicrous pretension to lay claim to the heritage of the Communist Left, and to texts of the workers' movement which belong to nobody if not to the working class, and of which proletarian organisations are the custodians, and the political and moral guarantors. This philistine thinks he can behave like any vulgar capitalist protecting his patents, putting it about that the product of the universal history of the exploited class is a commodity that can be reduced to the "intellectual property" of his own pathetic individuality. This is the merest swindle, a takeover bid worthy of Hollywood. The working class does not produce militants as individuals, but revolutionary organisations which are the product of struggle and a historic continuity. This is already contained in the 1864 Statutes of the IWA: "*In its struggle against the collective power of the possessing classes the proletariat can act as a class only by constituting itself as distinct political party, opposed to all the old parties formed by the possessing classes.*" (Article 7a). Workers' organisations defend principles which are the fruit of historical experience. In this sense, the work of their militants is part of a movement which is not and cannot be their "personal property". The ICC's statutes state with the

utmost clarity something which was once a morally self-evident fact within the proletariat: *"every militant who leaves the ICC, even as part of a split, **returns to the organisation all the material means** (money, technical material, stocks of publications, internal bulletins etc.) which had been put at the militants disposal"* (our emphasis).

Here then is Doctor Bourrinet's true face! Grab his swag, and then turn to bourgeois justice out of personal vengeance and to flatter his injured vanity. This violation of his initial moral commitment, when he was a militant, is not merely pitiful, it is completely foreign to the workers' movement. This pettifogging, petty-bourgeois legalism, fuelled by personal revenge, is something unheard of in the Communist Left that this fraud claims to defend. What terms should one use to speak of Doctor Bourrinet? So many spring to mind that we are left at a loss which to choose, so let us just say that he is "unspeakable".

Doctor Bourrinet slanderer of our comrade Marc Chirik

This is not the end of the unspeakable Doctor's exploits. Not only is he ready to use the vilest methods to damage his one-time organisation, the ICC, he also sets out to attack the memory of a militant who played a determining role in its formation: Marc Chirik, deceased in December 1990.

To this end, he uses a biographical sketch published on his web site, and which includes, amongst others, those published at the end of his new version of the book on the Italian Left.

In the biographical sketch published at the end of the book, he permits himself a petty attack on Marc Chirik: *"For Jean Malaquais, the friend of a lifetime, he embodied a certain kind of political 'prophet'"*. On Doctor Bourrinet's web site, the sentence is longer and the attack more open: *"For Jean Malaquais, the friend of a lifetime, he embodied a certain kind of political 'prophet', constantly trying to prove to others and to himself that he had 'never made a mistake'"*.¹² We recognise here the style of the two-faced Doctor Bourrinet. He starts with the "friend of a lifetime" the better to put over a negative image, without saying that while Malaquais was a great writer and a fine polemicist who shared the positions of the Communist Left, he did not have the personality of a communist militant, nor an understanding of what it means to be one. In the days when Malaquais lived in Paris and came frequently to our public meetings, he asked at one point to join the ICC; Marc Chirik had little difficulty persuading the other comrades that we could not accept his candidature, given his often haughty attitude both to our militants and to our activities.

This sketch of Marc Chirik is petty-minded sniping, but worse is to come. In an addition, Doctor Bourrinet repeats the vilest slanders put about against our organisation, in particular by the pack of hooligans and grasses that called itself the "Internal Fraction of the ICC":

"In 1991-93, very shortly after his death, Marc Chirik's group was shaken by a furious 'war of succession' between the 'leaders' to put themselves at the head of the 'masses' of the ICC, in reality the most grotesque conflicts worthy of an asylum".

Doctor Bourrinet then passes the microphone to the "adversaries" of our comrade and our organisation, to heap a cartload of muck on both:

"For his political adversaries, Marc Chirik remained a figure of the past, attached to the worst aspects of the Leninist and Trotskyist current, a remote disciple of Albert Treint, stooping to 'Zinovievist' manoeuvres and not hesitating – during yet another split, in 1981, to carry out 'Chekist raids' against 'dissidents', to 'defend the organisation' and to 'recover its equipment'.

*Exercising a monolithic control over 'his' organisation, Marc Chirik thus helped to plunge it, from an early stage, into a sort of paranoid psychosis. A sombre reality which, in the eyes of many ex-militants, tore apart the 'Chirikist' organisation, whose most visible defects were: political dishonesty raised to the level of a categorical imperative, 'police tactics of harassment', a carefully cultivated atmosphere of ultra-sectarian paranoia using the 'theory of the plot' **ad nauseam**, and recommending, to resolve political divergences, the prophylactic eradication of the 'parasitism' of 'enemy organisations'.*

To conclude:

1. *a triumphant (and accepted) return of 'repressed' Stalinism in 'praxis';*
2. *a superficial attachment to the 'acquisitions of Freudianism' where the 'struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie' lives alongside 'the eternal struggle of Eros and Thanatos', and between 'good' and 'evil', the latter being the 'proletarian morality' of which the ICC is the custodian through its 'central organs';*
3. *a quasi-religious devotion to Darwinism, as a method for 'selecting' the most 'adapted' political species, under cover of the development of the 'social instinct' of which the ICC is the ultimate incarnation;*
4. *under the 'virtuous' mantle of 'proletarian morality', the triumph behind the scenes of political amorality, the 'eternal return' of 'Nechaev's catechism' where anything goes to destroy a political enemy".*

As anyone can see, the accusations repeated by Doctor Bourrinet are not only aimed at Marc Chirik and the ICC when he was alive, but largely post-date his death. For example, the ICC never discussed Darwinism or published articles on the subject in Marc Chirik's lifetime. Only since 2009, 20 years after his death, did the ICC deal with the question in our internal discussions or publish articles on the subject. In fact, Doctor Bourrinet's intention is to kill two birds with one stone: to demolish both Marc Chirik and the ICC, whose principal founder he was.

In fact, this veritable inventory of accusations offers us a condensed version of the "Bourrinet method". He bows to the formal respect of historiographical standards by

following his sketch with a bibliography where, indeed, we can find the sources for all these insanities. But so vast is this bibliography that the slanderous publications are drowned there. Moreover, it is difficult even for a "specialist" to access many of the texts referred to, such that most readers are unlikely to check "who said what". And this is precisely what counts. If one were to include, in a biography of Trotsky, a passage on what his political adversaries said about him, and if amongst the accusations were one claiming that he had been "an agent of Hitler", then the mere fact that the accusation came from Vyshinsky, the prosecutor at the Moscow trials, would be enough to discredit it. We have no intention of burdening the reader with a systematic refutation of all the slanders directed at Marc Chirik and the ICC in the articles so obligingly referenced by the good Doctor. Suffice it to say that for the most part they come from ex-members of the ICC who, for whatever reason, are eaten up by a tenacious hatred for our organisation. Some are still under the influence of anarchist ideas which have led them to adopt the slogan "Lenin=Stalin". Others have felt that the organisation did not appreciate their true worth, or couldn't face up to criticism and found that the defence of their hurt pride was more important than the defence of communist positions. Others have distinguished themselves by thuggish behaviour, while still being ready to call the police when the ICC visited them to recover equipment stolen from our organisation. Still others – or the same – continue to defend the dubious element Chénier, excluded in 1981, and who was shortly after to be found making a career for himself in the Socialist Party then in power.

If Doctor Bourrinet repeats certain accusations whose absurd, and even insane, character is obvious to anyone, it is probably not because he thinks that they will be believed as such, but because they make it possible to put about the idea that "there's no smoke without fire", and that "even if it's exaggerated, there must be some truth behind it". The Bourrinet method again: if you throw enough mud, something will always stick.

One final word on this. Doctor Bourrinet has written biographical notes of many militants of the Communist Left, but only Marc Chirik has had the privilege, of having not only his militant life, but also the accusations made against him, exposed in detail. All this without, needless to say, so much as a word about, or a reference to the texts (articles, interventions on forums, etc.) which refute these accusations, and all this in the name of "serious", "honest" historical research!¹³

Let us return then to the idea that Doctor Bourrinet is "a serious and honest historian". As Marx put it, we must "protest" against any such idea. In his 1989 article for our press, announcing the forthcoming publication of the ICC's *Dutch-German Communist Left*, the good Doctor referred to several serious and honest historians of the workers' movement: Franz Mehring, Leon Trotsky, both revolutionary militants, but also George Haupt, who was "far from being a revolutionary" to use Doctor Bourrinet's words: "*On this point it's worth again citing the historian Georges Haupt, who died in 1980, and was known for the seriousness of his works on the IInd and IIIrd Internationals:*

'With the aid of unprecedented falsifications, treating the most elementary historical realities with contempt, Stalinism has methodically rubbed out, mutilated, remodelled the field of the past in order to replace it with its own representations, its own myths, its own self-glorification(...)'.

The least one can say is that the same "probity" hardly characterises Doctor Bourrinet. As we have seen, he hesitates not a moment to proffer the most colossal lies when it suits him – whenever historical reality does not fit his own "self-glorification". When he was a militant of the ICC, Doctor Bourrinet produced work that was interesting, important, and honest. Since then, it is possible that some of his studies may have been honest, if not necessarily interesting or important. But what is sure, is that his honesty flies out the window whenever the subject concerns his obsessive pet hates: the militant Marc Chirik and the International Communist Current. After all, there are Stalinist historians who have produced excellent studies of the Paris Commune, but it would be too much to expect that they would be capable of doing the same for the history of the "Communist" Parties.

As far as the other illusions about Doctor Bourrinet are concerned – that he is *"a defender of the Communist Left's ideas and a connoisseur of its main organisation, the ICC"* – here again, what we have said above shows that these are far from the truth. As a connoisseur of the ICC, we have seen better: either he takes the insane accusations of the ICC and Marc Chirik's "political adversaries" at face value, in which case his "knowledge" is worthy of *Hello!* magazine or *Minute*,¹⁴ or he does not, which is worse. As for the defence of the ideas of the Communist Left, there is nothing to expect from someone whose overriding obsession is the defence of... his intellectual property, and who, to do so, has no hesitation in bringing in the bourgeois state. When one claims to defend certain ideas, the least that can be expected is that one does not act in flagrant contradiction to those ideas. There is nothing to be expected of someone who is devoured by hatred to the point where he can cover in shit the memory of Marc Chirik, one of the very rare militants of the Communist Left who, rather than remaining welded to his initial positions, was capable of integrating the essential insights of both the Italian and the Dutch-German Communist Left, and defending them to his dying day.

For Doctor Bourrinet, the ideas of the Communist Left are mere stock in trade, inherited from the days when he was a militant, and which he is trying as best he can to capitalise in the service of his need for social recognition (since he can't make any money out of it).

Doctor Bourrinet, the petty-bourgeois democrat

To demonstrate this assertion conclusively, it is worth reading the biographical sketch devoted to Lafif Lakhdar (deceased July 2013), published on the site *Controverses* which presents itself as a "Forum for the Internationalist Communist Left" – a sketch signed Ph B (the good Doctor, in person no less).¹⁵ In the introduction, Lafif Lakhdar is presented as *"an Arab intellectual, writer, philosopher and rationalist, a militant in*

Algeria, the Middle East and France. Known as 'the Arab Spinoza'. In the sketch itself, we learn that "From 2009 onwards he took part, with the philosopher Mohammed Arkoun (1928-2010), in UNESCO's Aladdin project, an 'intellectual and cultural programme' launched with the patronage of UNESCO, Jacques Chirac, and Simone Weil". We also learn that "In October 2004, he co-authored, together with numerous liberal Arab writers, a Manifesto published on the web (www.elaph.com, www.mettransparent.com) calling on the UN to set up an international tribunal to judge terrorists, and organisations or institutions inciting terrorism". Frankly, we have great difficulty seeing what this biography is doing on a "Forum for the Internationalist Communist Left", and why someone who claims to belong to the Communist Left should write it. As far as one can judge from this, Lafif Lakhdar was probably a man full of good intentions and not without a certain courage in standing up to the threats of Islamist fanatics, but whose action was entirely within the framework of bourgeois "democracy", and in defence of the illusions thanks to which the bourgeoisie maintains its domination. For anyone who had anything to do with the Communist Left, it would be out of the question to call on the UN (that "den of thieves" to use Lenin's expression about the League of Nations) "to set up an international tribunal to judge terrorists". Should we react to terrorist attacks by demanding that the bourgeois state strengthen its police and judicial arsenal?16 Indeed, amongst Lafif Lakhdar's achievements, there is one that Doctor Bourrinet does not mention (did he forget, or did he hide it?): an open letter dated 16th November 2008 to the new President of the United States, Barrack Obama, suggesting that he "*change the world in 100 days by concluding a reconciliation between Jews and Arabs*".17 In the letter, we find the following passages:

"Solving this conflict, with its explosive mixture of religion and politics, would be an agreeable surprise from you to the peoples of the region and the world. It would have undoubtedly a positive psychological impact on all the other crises, including the world financial crisis.

How can this be achieved? (...)

Send an American peace delegation headed by President Clinton and the outgoing Israeli President Ehud Olmert,18 and made up of Prince Talal Ben-Abdul Al-Aziz, the symbolic representative of the Arab peace initiative, and of Walid Khalid and Shibli Talham as representatives of the Palestinian people.

And what is the solution?

First of all, the application of Mr Clinton's parameters which give the Jews what they have been lacking since the destruction of the Temple in 586BCE, and to the Palestinians what they have never had in their history: an independent state. Then, the application of Ehud Olmert's 'advice' to his successor, which would accord the Palestinians the major part of their demands..."

And the letter concludes:

"President Barack Obama, it is said that you have little experience; by solving, in your administration's first hundred days, a century-old conflict which has provoked five bloody wars and two **intifadas**, you would demonstrate to the world that you are a competent and responsible leader, and make a gift to the 80% of the world population who prayed for your success and so celebrated your victory". Could the Communist Left do no better than that?

Doctor Bourrinet's biographical sketch of Lafif Lakhdar is published on the site *Controverses* under the heading "Internationalists". But what exactly is an internationalist? Someone who not only denounces chauvinism and military barbarism, but who defends to the utmost the only perspective that can put an end to them: the overthrow of the capitalist system by the world proletarian revolution. And this necessarily involves the denunciation of all pacifist and democratic illusions, and all the bourgeoisie's political forces that spread them, however "democratic", "enlightened" or well-intentioned they may be. Whoever has not understood this stands not on proletarian ground, but on that of the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie. Our eminent Doctor (just like the equally eminent publishers of *Controverses*) clearly does not know the difference between a democratic humanist bourgeois and an internationalist, in other words a revolutionary. And this is because Doctor Bourrinet's viewpoint is not that of the working class but of the petty bourgeoisie. This is clear enough in our account of the Doctor's behaviour since he left the ICC, but his sketch of Lafif Lakhdar confirms it in as striking a manner as you could wish.

In fact, Doctor Bourrinet's frantic search for official social recognition, his use of bourgeois institutions, and the state, to defend his "copyright" and his "intellectual property", his pettiness, his bad faith, his lies, his cowardice, and to cap it all, his hatred for the organisation and the militants thanks to whom he was able to write his two books, all the Doctor's contemptible behaviour since 1992, are not merely expressions of his personality. They are also, and much more, the expression of his belonging to the social category which most concentrates all these moral defects: the petty bourgeoisie.

As we shall now see, the conference where Doctor Bourrinet figured as speaker amply confirms everything we have said about his person.

A significant conference

Doctor Bourrinet began with a long and soporific introduction. But the lethargy that crept over the audience (including the chair) was not merely because the Doctor has all the charisma of an oyster. More fundamentally, it was the fruit of a speech without soul or fighting spirit, at the end of which the chair could conclude that "*the past is past*" and that "*questions today are posed differently*".

There followed logically a whole series of "new" questions from the audience, such as "the situation in the prisons" (very new!) and of "precarious labour", etc. In short, the

sole effect of Doctor Bourrinet's discourse was to present the tradition of the Communist Left as something without interest for the present or the future, something from a vanished past to be read about in books fit only to gather dust on the shelf, at the disposal of university researchers.

In other words, Doctor Bourrinet's presentation confirmed what all his behaviour up to then had already revealed: that henceforth, for our good Doctor, the history of the Communist Left has become a mere academic discipline and has nothing to do with the words of the militant Philippe Bourrinet, when as Chardin he wrote that it was: "(...) *first and foremost a weapon in its present and future struggles, because of the lessons from the past that it contains*" (*International Review* no.58, *ibid*).

But there's more to come! Doctor Bourrinet made the most of the soporific effect of his presentation to slip in, as is his wont, a few historical falsifications – in perfect conformity with his tendency to "rearrange" history to suit himself.

He thus described the different Communist Lefts (of Italy, Holland, and Germany) as if they were completely isolated from each other, as if they had no interaction with each other. Nothing could be farther from the truth! It is true that in 1926, the Italian Left refused a proposal from Karl Korsch (then member of a group in Germany around the review *Kommunistische Politik*) for a common declaration by all the Left currents of the day (cf letter from Bordiga to Korsch of 28th October 1926/19). But the Left Fraction of the Italian Communist Party, which published *Prometeo* in Italian from 1929, and then *Bilan* in French from 1933, not only had the firm intention to confront its positions with those of the other left currents, above all with those of Trotsky's Left Opposition and of the Dutch-German Left, it also adopted several positions of the latter current. For example, the analysis of national liberation struggles worked out by Rosa Luxemburg within the German and Polish Social-Democracy, then taken up by the German Left, was integrated into *Bilan's* positions at the end of the 1930s.

Better still, this "expert" of the Communist Left even managed to ignore completely the very existence of the French Communist Left (Gauche Communiste de France, GCF). Just as, in Stalin's day, people disappeared from photographs at each rewriting of official history, so our good Doctor somehow "forgot" all about this group, created at the end of World War II, in 1944. And with good reason: the distinguishing feature of the GCF (which published *Internationalisme*) was precisely its profound synthesis of the Lefts of different countries, in continuity with the work of *Bilan*. By drawing its inspiration from *Bilan's* theoretical advances, and still more from its vision of a living, non-dogmatic marxism, open to every expression of the proletariat internationally, the GCF prevented this little group from falling into oblivion, and made it on the contrary a bridge between the best proletarian traditions of the past, and the future of the proletarian struggle. In other words, when Doctor Bourrinet wipes the GCF from the whiteboard of history he also, in a sense, wipes out *Bilan*, he breaks the historic continuity between revolutionary groups, and he breaks the transmission of this

precious experience of our illustrious predecessors. In a word, he disarms the proletariat before its class enemy.

All this is perfectly deliberate on Doctor Bourrinet's part. He knows perfectly well the GCF's existence and its place in history. This is not the fruit of an unfortunate forgetfulness, or of ignorance; it is a deliberate effort to hide a truth which he would prefer to ignore: that the GCF made a contribution of prime importance to the thought of the Communist Left.

Why so? The answer is simple. Purely out of hatred for the ICC, the only organisation which explicitly claims a descent from the GCF, and out of hatred for the militant who played a key role in the formation of the ICC and was the main thinker behind the GCF: Marc Chirik.

Doctor Bourrinet's hatred, which we have already seen at work in his various writings, was laid out for all to see at this public conference.

When the ICC's delegation tried to call out the good Doctor for his falsifications and his "intellectual property", he became perfectly hysterical (as everyone could see): "*you are terrorists and cheats*", he cried, "*you have forced many militants to resign from the ICC by stifling them*" – in other words, he repeated all the slanders of "Marc Chirik's political adversaries" which he has reported so "objectively" in the biographical sketch published on his web site.

Up to now, our Doctor has spread his venom from the shelter of official bodies, "doctored" biographical sketches, and "statements" on the Internet. This time, for once, he has dared do so in public, before four militants of the ICC. Such a change in attitude calls for an explanation.

As we have seen, Doctor Bourrinet is the prototypical petty bourgeois: cowardly, dishonest, and little inclined to spit his bile in the light of day, except... when the wind of rumour swells the cries of hatred against the ICC. Then he gets drunk on "courage" and is ready to take his part in the vilest of slander and the lowest of threats against our organisation. Through the centuries, calls to pogrom have always been thus: each participant makes his own wretched contribution according to his own motives, all different but all equally shabby and full of hate. Almost every time, this kind of barbaric dynamic is started by some kind of *provocateur* – whether a professional or an amateur is really immaterial. It is precisely into this that our unspeakable Doctor has plunged, hook line and sinker. After reading the anti-ICC prose of the IGCL,²⁰ that seedy bunch of police-like back-room plotters with its *provocateur* Juan, the good Doctor has perked up no end and is ready to answer the call to villainy and hatred.

On 28th April 2014, the IGCL²¹ published an article as bad as anything by a professional *provocateur*. This slanderous text was titled "A new (and final?) crisis in the ICC!",²² and announced with ironic delight the ICC's disappearance... which turned out

to be "thoroughly exaggerated".²³ But however unfounded, the mere idea that the ICC is weakened, almost at death's door, has galvanised all those who are obsessed with the hope of seeing us dead and buried. And it is in this "courageous" crowd that we find the Doctor Bourrinet, all hot and flustered at the idea that he too can now howl with the wolves against the ICC. But even the encouragement of the *provocateurs* of the IGCL was not enough to give him pluck; he needed the comforting company of an acolyte alongside him, small in brain but big in brawn, and above all with the mentality of the hoodlum ready for any underhand villainy against the ICC: none other than Pédoncule,²⁴ always ready to reassure and motivate our Doctor should his courage fail him during the conference. This individual has an edifying, and violent, pedigree: physical aggression against one of our women comrades, aggression against another comrade threatened with the switch-blade he always carries on him, and threats to "slit the throat" of yet another.²⁵

The association of the Doctor and the hooligan (which could have been made into a French movie with Jean-Louis Trintignant and Depardieu in the title roles) may seem paradoxical, but should come as no surprise. The alliance between the intellectual petty bourgeoisie and the lumpenproletariat is not new, and in general it comes when they confront a common enemy: the revolutionary proletariat. In 1871, the majority of French writers (with the noteworthy exceptions of Arthur Rimbaud, Jules Vallès, and Victor Hugo) lined up with the scum of Paris to cheer on the Versaillais who slaughtered the Commune: the former with the pen, the latter more concretely through grassing and assassination.²⁶ In 1919, the "honorable" leaders of German Social-Democracy used the lumpenproletariat grouped in the *Frei Korps* (the predecessors of the Nazis) to assassinate thousands of workers, at the same time as they murdered Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, the German revolution's leading lights. Today, the petty bourgeois Bourrinet, Doctor of the University of Paris 1 – Sorbonne, teams up with Pédoncule the Ripper: what could be more normal? Both share the same obsessive hatred of the ICC; both want to see the disappearance of the ICC, in other words of the main organisation defending internationally the positions of the Communist Left.

As far as we are concerned, we intend to continue distributing the two books on the Italian Left and on the Dutch-German Left, whether Doctor Bourrinet likes it or not. And we urge our readers to read these books, written by Philippe Bourrinet when he was a militant of the ICC. They have lost none of their value just because, since then, the militant has become a Doctor and betrayed the cause to which he had been committed in his youth. Nor will we give up denouncing the Doctor's infamy, his lies, his slanders, and his contemptible efforts to call the institutions of the bourgeois state to his aid to threaten our militants and satisfy his hatred. He need not, however, worry that we will send a commando to "slit his throat" – we will leave that kind of thing to his bodyguard, Pédoncule the Ripper.

The history of the workers' movement is littered with militants who once defended revolutionary proletarian positions, only to change camp and capitulate to bourgeois ideology to put themselves at the service of the ruling class. We all know what

happened to Mussolini, who was a leader of the Italian Socialist Party's left wing prior to World War I. Plekhanov, who introduced marxism to Russia and was one of the foremost figures in the struggle against Bernstein's revisionism at the end of the 19th century, turned into a dyed-in-the-wool social chauvinist in 1914. Kautsky, the 2nd International's "pope of marxism" and Rosa Luxemburg's comrade-in-arms up to 1906, in 1914 put his pen to serve, *de facto*, the imperialist war, and condemned the 1917 revolution in Russia, all the while proclaiming formally his attachment to marxism, right up to his death in 1938.

Today, Doctor Bourrinet continues to proclaim his formal attachment to the Communist Left and its positions. But this is a swindle. The Communist Left is not just a matter of political positions. It also means loyalty to principles, refusal to compromise, a will to struggle for the revolution, an immense courage – all qualities of which Doctor Bourrinet is utterly bereft. Read today *The Italian Communist Left*, and *The Dutch-German Communist Left*, not as Doctor Bourrinet's "intellectual property", but in the spirit of Philippe Bourrinet a quarter-century ago: "*It's only from a militant standpoint, the standpoint of those who are committed to the workers' struggle for emancipation, that the history of the workers' movement can be approached*".

International Communist Current, 15/01/2015

1The Smolny collective is a publisher specialising in the publication of books on the workers' movement, in particular of the Communist Left. See our article in French "Les éditions Smolny participant à la récupération démocratique de Rosa Luxemburg"

2"*M. Proudhon has the misfortune of being peculiarly misunderstood in Europe. In France, he has the right to be a bad economist, because he is reputed to be a good German philosopher. In Germany, he has the right to be a bad philosopher, because he is reputed to be one of the ablest French economists. Being both German and economist at the same time, we desire to protest against this double error.*" Marx, Foreword to *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847

3See our articles published in *International Review* nos.65-66

4This material support included the payment of much of the cost of his documentary research, including the purchase of large quantities of micro-films from the Amsterdam International Institute for Social Research.

5The Société des Gens des Lettres is a French organism dating from the early 19th century, and devoted in particular to the judicial protection of copyright on behalf of its author members. Copies of the documents in question are attached to this article.

6This appeared in the English edition, *The Dutch and German Communist Left*, published in 2001.

7We will henceforth accord the Doctor his official title. This cannot but satisfy his intense desire for social recognition.

8And, we would add, a hypocrite. But that is the rule rather than the exception.

9The price list can be found at <http://left-dis.nl/f/livre.htm>. Should the link disappear – one never knows! – we have of course kept a screen print as the site appeared on 15th January 2015.

10The ICC had decided to offer the English editions of the Dutch-German Left and the Italian Left on Amazon in order to maximise their distribution. In October 2009, we received a letter from Amazon informing us that these books had been withdrawn from sale following reception of a letter from Doctor Bourrinet, and that their sale would only be possible with the agreement of the latter. In a letter to Amazon dated 7th October 2009, signed "Doctor Philippe Bourrinet, Historian", we read that "*My intellectual*

property is being violated by two items on the Amazon.co.uk site. It has to do with the commercial selling of two books of mine (my name has disappeared) by the so-called 'International Communist Current', which clearly is committing acts of intellectual piracy [there follow details of the two books]. These two books have been published (electronic and paper forms) under my own name on my own multilingual website in the Netherlands (...) They have since a long time ago (1989) been protected by the law on intellectual property (...) I am the true property owner of the two mentioned books and authorized to act – together with the SGDL in Paris – for the rights described above". The ICC wrote to Doctor Bourrinet on 24th October 2009. In our letter we said, "We have to say that we were rather surprised, first by the fact that you felt the need to write to Amazon on this subject, and second that you said nothing to us about it beforehand. We were under the impression that the question of the 'intellectual property' over the two books on the Dutch-German Left and the Italian Left had already been amicably settled between us at a meeting at the beginning of the 1990s (...) At all events, we don't want this problem of 'intellectual property' to hinder the distribution of this history and these ideas. If you wish, we are perfectly prepared to publish the same notice [see above and note 6] (or whatever variation on it that might suit you) on the Amazon site (we can also include your name as the author) and on our own". This letter was never answered. Perhaps we should have offered to pay the Doctor an author's percentage on our sales. That said, we should point out that the English editions distributed by Doctor Bourrinet are identical (with the exception of his modifications since leaving the ICC) to the translations undertaken by the militants of our organisation. But let us reassure the good Doctor: we have no intention of claiming copyright on our translations.

11 Documents sent to the ICC

12 This translation into English is our own – which is more than Doctor Bourrinet can say of the English versions of "his" books.

13 The heinous onslaught on our comrade Marc Chirik's memory is nothing less than vile. Marc Chirik enjoyed a great respect among the vast majority of militants of the old Communist Left, despite their disagreements and the criticism he might have directed at them. The depth and the rigour of his thinking, his devotion to the revolutionary cause, his strength of character and at the same time the esteem and affection he had for those militants who had managed to resist the counter-revolution, were traits of his political character which commanded universal respect. When we read the insanities written about him by petty creeps whose pride has suffered a little scratch, or whose "intellectual property" has been ignored, we are frankly overwhelmed with disgust. This kind of campaign of denigration is all too reminiscent of the campaign of which Trotsky was a victim from the mid-1920s onwards, even before his exclusion from the Bolshevik Party, at the hands of the Stalinist clique, a campaign that was vigorously denounced by Bordiga (at the time the best-known figure of the Italian Communist Left), despite his profound disagreements with Trotsky. The servile scoundrels who, whether through cowardice or careerism, crawled in Stalin's wake, provide the model for Marc Chirik's slanderers today.

14 Magazine of the French far right.

15 The eminent Doctor on *Controverses*

16 Doctor Bourrinet sees nothing wrong with this. Hardly surprising, since he himself is prepared to use the bourgeois judicial system against revolutionaries.

17 Lafif Lakhdar writes to President Obama

18 Ehud Olmert. A close ally of Ariel Sharon (responsible for the massacre of Sabra and Chatila in September 1982), he was Israel's Prime Minister from January 2006 to March 2009, and responsible for the July 2006 Israeli attack on Lebanon, which cost more than 1200 civilian lives. In September 2009 he was tried for "fraud", "breach of trust", and "concealing fraudulent revenue", and in September 2012 he was given a one year suspended sentence.

19 Bordiga to Korsch

20 The "International Group of the Communist Left" (IGCL) was born in October 2013. It consists of a merger between two elements of the Klasbatalo group in Montreal, and

elements of the self-proclaimed "Internal Fraction" of the ICC, who were expelled as grasses from the ICC in 2003.

21 See our replies: The police-like methods of the 'IFICC', The ICC doesn't allow snitches into its public meetings, Calomnie et mouchardage, les deux mamelles de la politique de la FICCI envers le CCI

22 See our reply Communiqué to our readers: The ICC under attack from a new agency of the bourgeois state

23 We have answered this attack, as infamous as it is absurd, in our article on the Extraordinary Conference.

24 Like the Doctor Bourrinet, this Pédoncule is also a member of the Smolny collective. He was also a member, for several years, of the bunch of snitches and hoodlums that went by the name of the IFICC.

25 See our article in RI: Défense de l'organisation : Des menaces de mort contre des militants du CCI

26 Cf. Paul Lidsky, *Les écrivains contre la Commune*, La Découverte Poche, Paris, 2010.