

Communism against Democracy: Theses

*Internationalist Communist Group
1984*

Originally published online at the [John Gray website](#) with a note that “these theses were first published in February 1984 in issue 19 of *Le Communiste* the french language journal of the Internationalist Communist Group. This translation has not been made by them.”

These theses should be regarded as an attempt at synthesising the programmatic acquisitions of our organization on this fundamental question.

1. Democracy can by no means be reduced to a mere form (even the most “adequate”) of capitalist domination. On the contrary, democracy always affirms itself as the substance of capitalist dictatorship and thus, affirms the actual fact of its intrinsic and historical link with the commodity, “elementary form of capitalist wealth” (Marx).
2. The genesis of democracy, its historical development (culminating in the capitalist mode of production – M-C-M') is closely related to the appearance of the commodity and thus to the appearance, the development, to its capitalist apogee, and the disappearance of value (the communist revolution putting an end to the cycle of value).
3. Democracy appears with the political sphere as a need to constitute a community of individuals – citizens – subjected to the interests of the dominant class. If the State is the organization of the dominant class in order to maintain itself as such, democracy is this organization for the whole of society. The democratic State, the capitalist State is thus truly the apogee, the highest synthesis of all class societies for it is most clearly both the dictatorial and terrorist organization of the dominant class, and the organization of all free, individuals, equals and owners, organized within a non-human (and in this sense, fictitious) community – democracy – exclusively in the interest of the dominant class. Mystification is for the first (and last) time total: the individual man, atomized citizen, no longer exists as a human being (that is to say as a generic being), he is no longer anything except one commodity among others and for this reason is free and equal within circulation. He is thus, as singular individual, only a simple political particle of capital. It is in the sphere of circulation, the democratic Eden, according to Marx, that the classes and in particular the revolutionary class – the proletariat – are most denied, most destroyed, most non-existent. There is no longer anything but citizens organized within and by the democratic State.
4. This extreme situation of non-existence of the revolutionary class is found in periods of intense counter-revolution where the democratic State attains a high degree of purification, to pretend to be the only subject of history. The forms of this purification are found as much in the various Popular Fronts as in the various forms of Bonapartism: from Stalinism to Nazism, from Fascism to Peronism. In this sense,

the appearance of “fascoïd” forms (military coups by the left as well as the right...) are not a change in the nature of capitalist dictatorship; on the contrary, they are about its reinforcement, in conformity with its democratic substance: the dictatorial negation of class antagonisms to the benefit of the impersonal domination of the capitalist class.

5. From this arises the principled rejection of any alliance or front... aimed at binding the proletariat to the defense of this or that form of capitalist dictatorship against this or that other. Their substance being common and identical, it is right for revolutionary communism to act to destroy democracy in all its forms, not just those which are “malicious”, “dictatorial” and “military” but equally those which are “better”, “parliamentary” and “elective”. The communist revolution will be anti-democratic or it will not be.
6. Democracy being the organization of citizens (that is to say the disorganization and negation of the revolutionary class) to the benefit of the dominant capitalist class, as soon as the proletariat begins to constitute itself as a class, begins to reconstitute another community of interests in and by its struggle, it starts to destroy democracy, the fictitious community of capital, to the benefit of its own project: the world human community, communism.
7. Workers struggle organized, centralized and directed by its communist avant-garde always tends to progressively affirm its own being, its substance, the new community which it carries in itself and which will only be able to flourish with the thorough destruction of bourgeois society, its State and its social relations – wage-labour. As soon as they affirm, even in an extremely minoritarian and elementary way, proletarian interests and needs within the smallest action of the class, this assertion is already a dictatorial and anti-democratic affirmation for it aims at and requires the organized strength of a class, to impose on the whole of society, a social project which can only exist within capitalism as a violent negation of all the existing order. As soon as a class action appears, this means at the same time a crack however tiny in the democratic consensus, in the fictitious community, and the appearance, however embryonic, of the revolutionary class, that is of a community based on the historical interests of this class: communist society. The communist movement and democracy are thus in direct opposition; they represent, at the highest level, the contradiction present in all strata of society, between communism and capitalism.
8. When this contradiction explodes and the revolutionary proletariat succeeds in organizing itself as the dominant class (communist revolution leading to dictatorship of the proletariat for the abolition of wage labour), this organization of the proletariat into the dominant class, directed by the communists, achieves the communist program dictatorially, imposes ever more deeply on the whole of society the destruction of value, the extension of the dominant class and therefore the extinction of the latter as a separate sphere (negation of the negation). The result of this social process means the blossoming of a communist society without class and without State. The more the dictatorship of the proletariat for the abolition of wage labour is affirmed the more it affirms the famous semi-State (semi because it tends towards its own deterioration as a mediation, a particular and separated sphere), the more democracy is destroyed, and the more the atomization of individuals is destroyed, to the benefit of the appearance/generalisation of the new community prefigured by the communist party directing the whole of the transition process. Thus, the more the communist revolution triumphs, the greater the destruction of the substance of capitalist dictatorship: democracy.

9. This dictatorial and terrorist process of affirmation/negation of the proletariat as the dominant class always destroying ever more the basis of its own domination and thus founding a society without domination, without classes, without a State, without violence... therefore does not have anything to do with an ordinary "workers" democracy. On the contrary, the dictatorship of the proletariat for the abolition of wage labour is the most complete negation of democracy and by definition of that which is called worker. The assimilation of "workers" democracy and dictatorship of the proletariat is one of the most serious counter-revolutionary deviations, destroying the base of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the benefit of the reappearance of the system of wage slavery in a more "workerist" form.
10. "Workers" democracy does nothing but prolong and intensify all the mediations of capital (between politics and economy, between man and society...) by replacing the cult of Parliament, of freedoms, of atomised individuals... with a cult that is identical in principle, of the "democratic Soviets", of "free trade unions", of atomised workers... To the a-classist myth of people and nation in the "bourgeois democracy" version, corresponds the equally a-classist myth of the "sociological worker", of the "exploited majority", of the "popular masses" in the "workers democracy" version. The addition of the adjective "workers" to the reality of democracy, with its historical connection to the commodity, to money and to capital, does not change one iota the substance of democracy; in fact this addition is only useful in trying, once again, to pass off capitalist reality under the term "workers". "Workers" democracy wishes to represent the positive pole of capitalist dictatorship (just as the pole "wealth" is opposed to the pole "poverty") denying the totality which constitutes this dictatorship, namely, the production/reproduction of value on the basis of wage slavery. Just as Proudhon and the bourgeois socialists wanted to maintain capitalism by removing some of its "unpleasant" aspects, the "worker" democrats want at all costs to maintain democracy and its parade of "Freedom-Equality-Fraternity" in giving the working class the impossible task of removing its more "unpleasant" corollary, the cortege exploitation-prison-alienation. "Workers" democracy in fact is nothing more than the old capitalist myth of "workers" management, of the assumption of responsibility by atomized workers for their own exploitation. The atomized proletarians, crushed, drowned, denied as a class would thus be dictatorially conditioned to democratically vote for the continuation of their own exploitation, the perpetuation of wage slavery. The utopia of capital is thus updated under the cover of "workers" democracy: capital without contradiction: a "humanity" made up solely of workers existing only as producers of value.
11. For Marxism, there is a fundamental contradiction between communism and democracy, the victory of the one necessarily implies the destruction of the other.