

## Against the Myth of Democratic Rights and Liberties

*Internationalist Communist Group*  
1993

The source of this text is a new English translation published in 1993 in issue 8 of *Communism*, the ICG's English-language review. Available in its original electronic form at <https://web.archive.org/web/20190628134815/http://gci-icg.org/english/communism8.htm>. An earlier English translation from Spanish was published in November 1983 in the first issue of *Communism*.

### Introduction

The proletariat, in its tendency to organize itself as an autonomous class, needs to meet, to develop its press, to unite, to carry on strikes, to occupy factories, to organize direct action, to liberate confined comrades, to get arms. These tasks have been assumed with different results in all bourgeois periods of its historic fight, independent of the type of bourgeois domination: Bonapartist or parliamentary, republican or fascist.

The bourgeoisie's policy toward the proletariat consists in showing these needs as identical to all democratic institutions and liberties (free press, free association, amnesty, ...). It is not only the classical liberal bourgeois who try to convince us that democracy is the best, but also all the pseudo-working-class parties (socialist, Stalinist, Trotskyist, ...) which base their counter-revolutionary policy on the statement that the working-class will reach socialism through the conquest and the defence of all those rights and liberties.

In fact, there is a basic opposition between the mass of bourgeois democratic liberties and the needs of the proletariat to get organized on its own class field. The positions the proletariat conquers in this field can never be confused with so-called "working-class liberties".

In the same way as two opposite classes exist, there are two fundamental conceptions of workers' struggle. One is bourgeois, where one criticizes the lack of equality, of democracy, where one should fight for more rights and liberties. The other is proletarian, based on an understanding of the fact that the roots of all those liberties, rights and equalities are essentially of anti-worker type. This leads to the total practical destruction of the democratic State with its equality, rights and liberties. These two opposite conceptions show the contradiction between, on one hand, passive criticism – to improve, reform, and in this way, reinforce the exploitation system – and, on the other hand, active criticism, our criticism – the destruction of that exploitation system.

When the "right" tells us that the "left" is dictatorial and anti-democratic, that when the "left" reaches the government it does not respect the human rights and that our interest is therefore to wave the flag of democracy, to fight under its protection for pure democracy, is it a myth or do they have an objective interest in democracy? When the "left" tells us in the name of "Marxism" that the "bourgeoisie" and "capitalism" do not respect democratic liberties, that we have to defend them against fascist attacks, that we

have to crave them wherever they do not exist, that this is the way to socialism, is it only a mass of opportunistic slogans or are they really fighting for democracy?

The bourgeoisie always tried to use the proletariat (taken as atomized workers, as “citizen”) as a social basis, as slaves to serve its own dominant class interests. In this way, we already understand how the bourgeoisie always tries to make the workers fight for a different interest than their own (this partly answers the question). But do the bourgeoisie of left and right want democracy or not? The tale of liberties and human rights, is it only a mystification without any material basis or is there an objective reality that produces this democratic mystification? Do we have to infer that no bourgeois faction has any interest in having these rights and liberties of the citizens applied? (The corollary of this would be that the proletariat could avoid the bourgeoisie’s domination if it really fought for the defence of democracy). Or do we have to conclude to the contrary that the fight of capitalists for the paradise of democratic rights is really the supreme will of the bourgeoisie.

Of course, the revolutionary marxist criticism we develop here is based on this last thesis: the mass of human rights and liberties correspond exactly to **the ideal form** of the reproduction of capitalist oppression. Let’s see what this ideal form of democracy is and where it comes from.

### **The paradise of human rights and liberties**

The party of order, the general party of Capital, or in other words, all the bourgeois parties, is totally unable to face the proletariat organized as a class and therefore as a party. This is why that main secret of capitalist domination is to stop the organization of the proletariat as an autonomous force and there is nothing more efficient for the bourgeoisie than the mass of human rights and liberties to drown the working-class, to dissolve it in the false concept of the “people”. When the proletariat stops existing as a class, when each worker is a good citizen, with his liberties, rights and duties, he accepts all the rules of the game that atomize him and drown him in the mass where his specific class interests disappear. As a good citizen, he does not exist as a class, this is **the** condition for democracy to work.

But the reign of democracy as both “left” and “right” promise in the name of socialism and/or liberty, where there would be no classes but just citizens and free people, like any ideological form of the bourgeoisie does not come from nowhere and does not remain just as a pure idea outside the real world. On one hand, this world, “earthly paradise” of human rights, obeys a very precise material reality: the reign of the circulation of commodities from which all the defenders of Capital draw their principles and conclusions; on the other hand, all the mental forms, ideologies, which derives from this reign are accepted by society and are therefore objective. The dissolution of the working-class in the dead world of citizenship is nothing immaterial, even if it is based on the mystical world of commodities. One could think that the millions of pages written by marxologists and other capitalist lawyers, ... the capitalist State constitutions, the charts, the speeches, ... only passively serve the bourgeoisie, that it takes them into account or not according to circumstances. But this vision forgets that these very papers reflect and strengthen reality, that they belong to dominant ideology, which becomes **a material force** that reinforces and reproduces the whole social system. The laws and other official papers are just ideological products of capitalist dictatorship which have the task of defending it.

In the sphere of circulating commodities there are no classes; everybody is a citizen, everybody appears as a buyer and seller of commodities, *equal, free, and owner*. **Even when we sell our labour-power, we are in the paradise of human rights and liberties. Each one is aiming at his own private interests in the reign of equality, liberty,**

**and private property.**

- **Liberty:** because the buyer and the seller of commodities (including labour-power) does not obey any rule than their own free will.
- **Equality:** because in the world of commodities, everybody is a buyer and a seller, and everybody gets a value equal to the value contained in the commodities he is selling, exchanging equivalent against equivalent.
- **Property:** because each one appears, in the world of exchange as an owner of his commodity and he can only dispose of what belongs to him.

As **free and equal owners**, all citizens contract relationships giving rise to a natural brotherhood, which is the lawful reflection that guarantees liberties, equality and the identical possibility for each man to own commodities. Any buying or selling of commodity is the result of free will, a contract between men who, because of commodity, are owners, free, equal and like brothers.

It is this fetishised world of commodities, where there is no place for classes but only for men and citizens, that brings about the rights and liberties that enable them to decide on the regulation and improvement of this world. It is not only authorized to vote and to choose as a citizen, but it is also possible to have one's delegates in democratic organs for which the liberty of gathering, press, association, expression, etc. are guaranteed. The citizens can associate as electors and elected (in the bourgeois parties) or as buyers and sellers of commodity (in the trade-unions). Nothing is more natural for the citizens than to found political parties, to try to work in the government, in the ministries, the parliaments, or the "soviets". No need for any nobility certificate as a citizen, anyone, whatever his social position (of which the laws never speak) can become a deputy, a minister or a president. In the same way, as buyers or sellers of commodities, they can associate, form unions, refuse to buy or sell if the deal is not good enough. To this corresponds another mass of rights and liberties as the ones which rule private societies and the pseudo-workers' trade-unions. The buyers and sellers of labour-power, associated as such (never as workers or as capitalists, since nobody owns anybody else's work in the world of circulation of commodities) can even interrupt the delivery of the use-value: it is the liberty of strike. In the same way, the citizen who buys this commodity can decide to buy another one, it is the liberty of work. Or the citizen can decide to stop buying this commodity: it is the liberty of industry (under this reign, there is no lock-out). Let us not forget the rights of prisoners, nor general amnesty, which can only exist on condition that everybody behaves himself as a good citizen, a good buyer and a good seller, as "Amnesty International" and other humanists say.

Some people will point out that nowhere such rights and liberties can be found, that everywhere there are prisoners, everywhere the right to strike is limited, that in this country the right of property is limited and that in that country only one party is allowed, etc. All this is obvious. Nevertheless, in all these countries, there is a faction of the bourgeoisie that will criticize the lack of democracy of different governments, and to do so, it must have a democratic ideal as reference. This is exactly what we want to explain and denounce.

It is the only way to break with the bourgeois criticism of democracy and to recognize the enemy in all the defenders of a **pure and perfect democracy**. Indeed, as well as democracy being the product and the reflection of the mercantile basis of capitalist society, it is also the reference of all bourgeois criticisms which only aim at correcting the imperfections of democracy and where all the forces of counter-revolution concentrate in periods of revolutionary crisis.

But is it possible that the bourgeois ideology could really imagine such a society, where there would be no prisoners because no-one would steal, because no worker's group would organize itself, where any strike would be strictly legal, where any association would group buyers and sellers to make sure the commodities would be exchanged at the right price? Of course, yes. More than two hundred years ago the democrats had no problem in recognizing that the democratic republic should correspond to the "people of gods" as Rousseau said. Today the bourgeoisie, in its decomposition, is still unable to understand the limits of its historical perspective and holds on to its mystical ideas. If it found the need and the capacity to integrate all the religion it used to fight yesterday in the name of science, how can we doubt that it does not "honestly" long for the democratic paradise it has always fought for?

Man imagines god as a perfect image of himself, purified from all his contradictions. Capital imagines a perfect and everlasting reign because it is convinced that it is the positive pole of society, also purified from its contradictions (wealth/misery, growth/obstacles to the development of productive forces, "development"/"under-development", equality/oppression). It sees itself as identical to its positive pole (wealth, growth, equality, liberty, democracy, ...) For example, it has a completely a-historical and mystical conception of the valorization of Capital, as if it could exist without periodical massive destructions of social productive forces. Even if it calls itself socialism or communism, Capital always builds its own categories, its own analysis, its own vision of the world, ignoring the **unity** and the **deadly contradiction** between wage-labour and Capital. One can therefore not be surprised that in this democratic world, no one is exploited, no one is imprisoned, that one can find only capital, wealth, equality, justice, growth and liberty.

### **The contradictory unity of reality**

Let us now leave the world of ideas and of capitalist categories, of circulation and of citizenship, and let us return to the everyday world, the one of production and of Capital's valorization. The seller of labour-power is a worker, whether he believes in god or in democracy. In the factory he is nobody's equal, he is free of nothing, owner of nothing, not even of what he manipulates. If he wants, the worker can imagine that his citizenship is only interrupted, that his equalities, liberties and properties have been left in the cloakroom and that he will get them back when he gets out. But he is completely wrong. In his eight (or more) hours of work, he consumes raw material and machines to produce use-value that remains the property of Capital and in the other sixteen hours, during his holidays, he consumes food, beer, football or television to produce another use-value: his labour-power, which will be used in valorizing Capital. Outside of the mystical and ephemeral paradise of circulation and of free elections, the worker remains a worker, whether he likes it or not; even when he fucks (whether by pleasure or to produce a family) he is only a labour-power that valorizes Capital. **As such, he is neither equal, nor free, nor citizen, nor owner at any moment of his life. He is only a paid slave.** Even before he tries to organize himself to defend his worker's interests, he has already **all equality, property and liberty against him.**

But to penetrate the real meaning of the mass of bourgeois rights and liberties, one must not only shift from the circulation sphere to the production sphere (in their contradictory unity) but also reach the essence of the class contradictions in the society. In this way we understand that the first liberty of the proletariat is to be free from all property. In fact, the ancestors of the proletariat have been liberated by physical violence of any other property than that of their children and of their own labour-power. This liberty of all properties is the most important one. It determines all the other ones. Thanks to this liberty the proletariat is only free to sell his labour-power, but also free to die of hunger (he and his children), if he does not find a buyer. The equality under the reign of circulation of

commodities gives the worker the right to receive a value equal to the one of his labour-power and it is precisely this equality that takes away from him the product of his own work and warrants capitalist exploitation. Brotherhood is not a meaningless bourgeois slogan. It means, practically, the brotherhood of the bourgeois against the proletariat; under the form of national and democratic fraternity, it helps in tying the hands and feet of workers to their exploiters and bringing them to the massacre of their class-brothers on imperialist battle-fields.

True liberty, property and fraternity of democracy implies therefore a permanent situation of anti-proletarian violence. Repression is one of the indispensable elements of imposition, reproduction and extension of democracy. A long time ago, Marx used to denounce the sacred trinity "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" as equivalent to "Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery". Even more, the tendency to reach the paradise of pure democracy – where no one would complain of this liberty, equality, fraternity, property – implies a higher level of realization of democracy, which also implies the full use of the terror machine of the democratic State in its various forms. Therefore, for example, there is no organic change between the liberal and the fascist form of State, but only a process of purification of the State in its tendency to reach an inaccessible democracy.

Let us examine some other democratic rights and liberties. The right of election means that every 4, 5, 6, 7, ... years, the worker can dress as a citizen to go and choose his oppressors freely. That supposes of course, on one hand a free electoral campaign, that means the liberty for each bourgeois faction to invest in it following its means and, on the other hand, the liberty for others to imagine that society might change with the coming of such or such party at the head of the bourgeois government. The so-called rights and liberties even give the workers the "privilege" to choose between the self-named "worker parties": to choose the one that will be the most capable of directing the State of Capital and to organize the massacre of the proletarians who would tend to ignore the directives of the big "worker" parties and who would refuse what the majority has decided.

The liberty of press and propaganda simply insures the free market in such a way that only the economic potential and the financial capacity of the different parties would assume the control and domination of public opinion and would guarantee the free application of the majority principle. In front of this economical-political apparatus of the dominant class, the workers have as alternative: either the liberty, right and duty to resign themselves, or the force and the will to organize themselves as a class, for which no right or liberty will ever be conceded.

### **The so-called "workers' liberties"**

"We theoretically agree that democracy is the domination system of bourgeoisie" – so would the socialists, the Stalinists, the Trotskyists, etc. answer – "but what we must do now is to fight for the rights and liberties that serve the organization of the working-class: the right of association, of union action, of strike, of amnesty for political prisoners,... wherever these rights do not exist, and to defend them each time fascism attacks them". "What you don't understand," they would say, "is that we cannot fight for socialism without these rights."

Evidently, all these capitalist parties generally hide that "theory" – until last Judgment Day when they will all brandish it again – but let us examine the practice of the rights and liberties contained in the program these so-called parties call "minimum" or "transitional" (of all these rights we will only examine those that are supposed to be "workers' rights").

"The rights of reunion, of association, of unionism, the liberty of press are rights granted to the workers, they are conquests of the working-class". So speaks the

bourgeoisie (of left and right). After having produced value everyday for Capital, wearing out their force, their arms, their brains, their sweat, their blood,... their lives, the workers do not only have the right to go and watch football or get drunk at the bar to divert themselves, to be in a good shape and be good at work the next day, but also, the bourgeoisie gives them the right to discuss, to unionize and to send “delegates” to negotiate the price at which they will sell themselves. It is very logical that a seller tries to sell his commodity at high price and Capital admits that the trade-unions change unreasonable claims of the workers into “righteous salary claims”. These “righteous claims” are those that permit an increase in the exploitation rate, big enough to compensate the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. And it is even considered “legitimate” by all the bourgeoisie as long as it does not touch the national economy. There is no doubt that the trade-unions are the best specialists to formulate these “rights” and “legitimate” claims that do not hit the profit of Capital.

What else can we find in these rights granted by the bourgeoisie? NOTHING, absolutely nothing more.

In front of a real workers' association defending the workers' interests, fighting for a real reduction of work time, for a real increase in relative wages, Capital has no interest in accepting the right of association, of reunion, of press, of unionization, because these rights would necessary attack the profit rate and the national economy. And then, democracy would not have any other alternative than to use its cops, union troops, ... The parties never hesitate in using white terror against the workers' class movement, and always in the name of democracy and liberty, of the right to work, of the respect of the trade-union's decisions... Without any doubt, the same thing will happen every time the workers' association will become a school for communism, every time the question of socialism will stop being a question of words and a struggle will be carried on, not only for the increase in wages, but for the abolition of wage-labour.

It must be very clear that workers' associations, their press, their reunions and actions, ... that are based solely on the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat, must fight openly against Capital and its national economy. And in the name of the respect of legal unions, of the struggle against subversion, of unity against provocateurs, of the defence of national security, **these so-called liberties** are precisely what will be used as a repressive force against the class organizations.

And this practice is very coherent with democracy. Repression is democratic because it strikes when the workers leave their uniform of citizenship to act as a class, when they stop accepting being a well disciplined army for the valorization of Capital, for which the bourgeoisie had given them these rights and liberties.

This proves that contrary to what the bourgeoisie says, no right is granted to the working-class when it acts as a class. These rights are only granted to citizens, sellers of commodities. Repression of all those who do not accept to behave as good citizens is the logical answer to the bourgeois desire for a democratic paradise. There is no democratic paradise for those who do not respect democracy. As soon as the proletariat organises as a class, tries to attack the Capital dictatorship, democracy shows its terrorist face; as long as its dictatorship holds on firmly, democracy can show its liberal face to the stupid mass. The nice face of rights and liberties is therefore reserved only for the citizen, the one who bows down peacefully in front of the daily violence of the capitalist production system: wage-labour.

The same thing happens with the right to strike. The left wing of the bourgeoisie tells us that it is antagonistic to the capitalist juridical superstructure. No right is ever given to the class, to the workers in their struggle, they are only given to the sellers of commodities. As long as workers continue to accept simply being a force for Capital's valorization

they have all the rights to act as any seller of commodities: to claim the right value for their commodity, to refuse to sell, to stop delivering use-value, etc. And of course, on the other hand, we find the rights of the buyer: the liberty of work (which means unemployment, strikebreaking, lock out, etc.)... With this liberty, workers are the ones who remain everyday more exploited, and more enslaved.

And when they make a true strike without caring for any right or liberty, when they really attack the bourgeois interests, no right or liberty exists any more; they are accused of being provocateurs, or agents coming from abroad, ..., the true class strike is declared **illegal, wildcat, anti-union**, ... which in fact it is. Consciously or not, any class struggle fights **against** the legality of the reign of commodity and fights for its destruction.

And to do so, it cannot accept workers behaving like sheep, nor scabs, nor unions, nor the right to work, nor the right to strike. On the battlefield, when the workers use direct action against the trade-unions at the service of Capital, they have no right at all. One must be blind or naive to believe that the legalization of strikes, which does not come from us but from our enemies, gives us any guarantee of winning or protects us against State repression. On the contrary, the legalization of strikes is a way for the bourgeoisie to reduce the class strength of strikes.

Another example is the “amnesty for political prisoners” requested by Amnesty as well as by all the social-democrats, pacifists, Trotskyists, humanists, priests of any imperialist side, but only at the condition they are made prisoners by a State of the other imperialist side. Each State keeps its own prisoners and, at the same time, asks for the liberation of its neighbour’s in the name, of course, of human rights. Besides, the humanists only claim to care for political prisoners at a time when international conventions such as the “European Juridical Space” relegate all actions of proletarian violence to the rank of “common law delinquency”.

The height of their campaign, is that they all – committees for Chilean, Argentinean, Salvadorian exiles, support groups for RAF, the IRA, etc. – aim at getting the signatures of humanist social-democracies such as the German one, which does not retain many political prisoners since it has already eliminated most of them one by one. And just as in any imperialist war, each State is ready to negotiate some human flesh against investments or commodities. And they keep talking about “amnesty” and “human rights”. In this obvious trade of human flesh, the bourgeoisie cleverly puts together all prisoners, concealing the class character of the imprisonment of our comrades who were caught while fighting the bourgeois State. When a junta gets evicted, when a new president takes office, when such or such a party wins the elections, then they allow a “wide popular amnesty”. And they pretend that the best way to show solidarity with our imprisoned comrades would be to collect signatures from democrats, to participate – by sending donations and telegrams – in the campaigns organised by “Amnesty”, the parties, the parliamentary governments, ... We know that all this confusion is the exact opposite to the solidarity needed by all our imprisoned comrades. The only solidarity is class solidarity, which does not exist through humanist speeches, nor through the game of human rights on the side of the USA, the USSR or Cuba and which cannot be obtained by protest letters addressed to capitalist butchers asking them to torture a little bit less. But it exists through **the struggle against the bourgeoisie** in each country. Only the direct action of the working-class with its own means (strikes, sabotage of the national production, ...) will allow to impose its strength, to liberate the present workers who are imprisoned, but also to lay down the basis to organize class power, the proletarian dictatorship that will blow away the history of all States and all prisoners.

As with all other rights and liberties, the legal amnesty has nothing to do with workers’ struggle to free comrades from jails, because as long as the capitalist exploitation

system lasts, there will be prisoners and particularly, proletarian prisoners. One must not only know that there is no legal guarantee against prison and torture, but also that prison and torture will always be used in the name of the defence of these rights and liberties. In the same way that, under capitalism, every worker is potentially unemployed, any worker who does not accept the rules of the citizenship game is, **potentially, a prisoner. Repression, torture, murder are only applications of democracy.**

Moreover, the meaning of an amnesty is that the prisoners are “forgiven” for what they did. That means of course that they would deny the actions for which they have been condemned, or at least, that they would express that the actions that were valid yesterday are no longer valid today. In this way, the amnesty allows, in the name of “christian forgiveness”, the recuperation of actions that, originally, attacked the bourgeois State, and became, with the coming of another bourgeois faction to the government, “actions that are exaggerated but understandable within the struggle against dictatorship...”

A good example of this is the amnesty conceded by the “Young Spanish Democracy”. It forgave some “antifascist militants” above all in order to hide the fact that many imprisoned workers were fighting at the same time against Franco and against his antifascist cousins: in one word, against the whole bourgeois State. Some of the “anarchists”, of the “incontrolados”, are still in the prisons that became “democratic” again.

For us, the liberation of our imprisoned class comrades can only be made by reclaiming their heroic actions. We do not hope for any grace or pity from a class that shows us daily that it never hesitates in accumulating millions of dead bodies to develop its civilization. We know that only our **organized and armed force** can pull our comrades out of the **fascist and antifascist prisons**. And this is true, precisely because our force is the continuation of these actions for which our comrades fell. This is why, not only do we not ask for an amnesty, but to the contrary, we claim the reasons for which they have been imprisoned. K Marx held this position when he answered to his judges: “We do not ask for any excuse nor any pity; do not expect any from us tomorrow.”

In front of Capital, all proletarians are subversive. The fact of refusing to submit to its law means, consciously or unconsciously, fighting for its destruction. This is why, with all the victims of Capital (“political” or “of common law”), we say: “We are all subversive. We are all guilty of wanting to destroy this inhuman world.”

For all these reasons, the communist position on press, strikes, association, amnesty, liberties, about legality, is to assert without doubt that the organization of the proletariat is based on no right, no law, no liberty conceded by its enemy but on the contrary, is based on illegal action: the revolutionary organization for the destruction of wage-slavery. As Marx said: “We never kept this secret: the field on which we fight is not the legal one, but the revolutionary one.”

That does not mean that we abandon a strike when it becomes legal, or that we do not publish and distribute revolutionary press when it can circulate legally or that we refuse to get out of prison when a judge sets us free. That would simply be reacting anti-thetically on the same legal field.

One must not identify illegality and clandestinity. Any real strike is illegal but not clandestine, even if there are secret preparations for it. The organization of workers in class movements – revolutionary councils, soviets,... – stands on a completely illegal basis but develops public activities. The best example of this is the destruction of the bourgeois army by the proletariat. When the soldiers unify with the rest of the working-class, after a long work of communist secret propaganda, when they start using their weapons against the officers and destroy the capitalist army, they do not do it in a secret way, but openly, though it is the most illegal action one can imagine. To fight on the illegal field



means assuming all tasks independently of all democratic rights and liberties, which are only decisions of our enemy and therefore a strategy of the bourgeoisie to fight us.

### **Correlation of forces between classes and juridical formalization of an unavoidable situation**

Let us listen once more to the lawyers of Capital: "We are Marxists and we know very well that all these rights are bourgeois democratic rights, but the bourgeoisie is incapable of conceding them or maintaining them, we must impose them and obtain them by force. We must fight today for the right to strike, for the constituent assembly, for the amnesty of political prisoners, the liberty of association, of election, of press, etc." Some others will say that: "One must fight for the autonomy of the working-class to carry on the permanent revolution" or that "it is only a step".

**Have we ever seen a class that could stay autonomous, that could fight for its own class interests, while fighting at the same time for the purification of democracy, in other words for the interests of its class enemies?** This question finds no answer from the Trotskyists and the Stalinists. In their democratic vision of history the proletariat would not be the first class of history to be at the same time exploited and revolutionary, but rather the least autonomous and most servile class of all history. While in their past revolts the slaves used to attack the slavery system and their masters, the serfs used to attack all medieval institutions, the church and the lords; these "Marxists" say that the proletariat should struggle for bourgeois purposes, with bourgeois means to prepare its own revolution!

But what is the relation between a proletarian advance and the concession of such or such a right or liberty by the bourgeoisie?

Let us take an example: the situation in Argentina in 1973. For years, glorious workers' struggles took the prisoners out of their jails. At the same moment, the "bureaucratic" and "anti-bureaucratic" Peronists, the Trotsky-Morenists of the PST asked the workers to wait for the amnesty order, without knowing if it included the grave delinquency (crimes, offenses, ...) cases. The workers' struggle emptied Villa Devoto and permitted many comrades to re-enter the struggle. How should we interpret these facts? For the classical bourgeois parties, the coming out of prisoners is always a consequence of what they legally concede; for those bourgeois parties that call themselves "workers' parties", it is the opposite: the amnesty orders are the great workers' victory. Both kind of bourgeois parties agree to characterize the **juridical formalization** as fundamental. There is a difference between these two tendencies, but they are both tendencies of the same class: **the bourgeoisie**. They only disagree on the way to kill the workers' movement, to integrate it democratically and to justify juridically the situation.

But for all communist revolutionaries, on the contrary, the victory is not to obtain decrees but expresses itself in the organisative fortification of our class, in the practical affirmation of its autonomy and in the fact that the prisoners could join their class brothers in the street. What about the amnesty? It is only a juridical manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie to try to integrate in its democratic legality what is happening in the streets and that it can not avoid any longer. Its aim is obvious: to turn a situation that is favourable to its historical enemy to its own advantage. The coming out of prisoners is disguised in amnesty by means of its juridical formalization.

There is the same opposition between the right of press and the existence of an autonomous workers' press. In general the liberty of press guarantees the liberty of undertaking and the financial aspect is predominant. But in certain circumstances, the liberty of press can be extended to the workers' press as long as the latter does not have much influence and that, through its free circulation, it can be controlled by the bourgeoisie. But

in a world where everything is commodity, where everything tends to dissolve in the world of exchange, of money or consumption, let us not have any illusion: the workers' press will never develop on that ground.

The same thing happens with the right to strike. Let us leave aside the well-known case of strikes that do not attack the profit rate of the bourgeoisie. A strike is only recognized legally when the bourgeoisie is in a weak position and has no other solution to try to break a strike than to legalize it. Both cases are bound but any way, legalization never brings anything new to the proletariat in its struggle. Its force is only its organized and conscious force, before and after legalization.

Another question for those so-called "Marxists" to think about: for what other reason would the bourgeoisie give any right to its historical enemy (the proletariat)?

If it were true that these rights and liberties would help the revolution, why hasn't there been any revolution in the countries that have a long democratic tradition, in the U.S.A. for example? Why did it develop in Russia, which had known centuries of Tsarism and only a few months of "democracy"? And why did it burst out in the most "democratic" regime of the whole Russian history, the one of the social-democrat Kerensky? On what rights and liberties could the workers in Iran rely to defend their strikes and their struggle of 1978/79? In what way did the acknowledgment of the "Solidarity" union in Poland help the workers' movement to develop and extend? Didn't it happen precisely to recuperate the movement by taking it away from its anti-capitalist and therefore internationalist and autonomous aims to deviate it on the reform and democratisation of the exploitation system, with the blessing of both the Pope and Brezhnev?

Why shouldn't we ask the right of insurrection? There is an answer to all these questions, and it concerns the material class' interests that are antagonistic to the interests of the proletariat. In fact it is quite normal that the democratic right or left bourgeoisie would try to impose its own "human rights" and would make no distinction between amnesty and liberation of prisoners, the right of strike and the strike, the right of press and the existence of a workers' press. The heart of all this mystification is to consider the juridical formalization as a workers' victory while it is nothing but a **weapon of the bourgeoisie**.

### **Two ways of interpreting history**

To defend its interests, the bourgeoisie needs to interpret history in its own way. It always tells us that we do not know history, that the working-class has always struggled to obtain the right to vote, to strike, ... All the so-called workers' parties reduce the history of proletarian struggles to a question of conquests of democratic rights in the aim of justifying their past, present and future actions.

These servants of Capital refuse to see the class antagonisms and the specific interests of the working-class. They use the slogans of the masses which are still submitted to the dominant ideology to prove that workers have always fought for pure democracy and in this way, they kill a second time the millions of workers "democratically" slaughtered throughout the history of struggles. In doing so, they try to justify their functions as deputies in the bourgeois State apparatus. But one must replace the facts on their real basis (i.e. the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat which are strictly opposite to the ones of the bourgeoisie), all these struggles aim at destroying class society, whatever the momentary consciousness of the workers who live these struggles could be.

"It does not matter much what a worker, or even the whole proletariat, imagines he is aiming at. What matters is what he is really and historically obliged to do." (Marx) We do not care about the flags that float over the struggles, we care only about the enormous

efforts of the proletariat to organize itself and fight the bourgeoisie. Therefore it is very logical that while so-called “Marxists” consider that universal suffrage is a conquest of the proletariat, we consider that any reform of the State is a way to perfect the domination methods of the bourgeoisie. The only true conquests of the working class are its experience (in struggle) and its growing autonomy and power of organization. What remains of its struggles is the political conclusions that worker (proletarian) minorities can draw from their history. It is only through this “workers’ memory” carried by minorities that the movement can avoid continually making the same mistakes.

On the other hand, the interpretation of history based on the “democratic conquests” of workers have led the defenders of this vision to parliament and its ministries. This is not surprising. One must not forget that the capitalist class is the first dominant class in history for which blood privileges are not determinant. Any citizen, even a “worker”, can reach the bourgeoisie if he has good capacities to defend the bourgeois point of view: this is called social climbing. In this way, democracy can choose the best elements of a worker’s origin to control more efficiently the workers’ movement. Let us remember the example of the “worker” Noske, who became the leader of the Berlin insurrection of 1919, and who killed R. Luxembourg and K. Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches and thousands of revolutionary workers.

This system not only allows some “workers” to reach a position of oppressors of their ex-class brothers, but also entire “workers’ parties” to be chosen by Capital to reinforce its domination (for example: the parties of the 2nd International). So it is not surprising that these parties interpret history as a succession of steps leading to democracy.

As a conclusion, we should say that the two ways of interpreting history correspond to the interests of the two antagonistic classes of our society: either the struggle of the proletariat for the communist revolution, or the bourgeois defence of the democratic dictatorship of Capital.

### **What do the pseudo-marxists want?**

Let us now leave the questions of parliaments, ministries, governments, unions, directors, and let us examine the following question: what “working-class” does the left wing of Capital wish to see, what would be the result of its politics, what social situation is it aiming at?

To accept their orders means striking for the defence of rights, associating in the name of liberty of unions (with them and under their direction), talking in the name of the right of expression, electing “workers” deputies in the name of democracy; and why wouldn’t we also go to jail in the name of the right of amnesty and of the right of the prisoners, why wouldn’t we risk our lives in the sacred name of citizenship?

We are not exaggerating: how many workers, who believed them, have ended up being prisoners or being killed for having written on a wall the order of their own submission: “Long live democracy, death to dictatorship!”?

If the bourgeoisie reaches this aim, it can control in all respects its system of domination, and that is what has happened historically. When a faction of the bourgeoisie is “worn out” by the use of power, it wishes to take a rest and leaves the “opposite” faction to continue its work. The right wing would take care of the killing and imprisonment of the proletarians while the left wing would direct all the workers’ claims towards human rights and democratic liberties. We could even imagine that a time would come when the workers would not even think of striking for their “shabby interests”, when no “mad” group would have the evil thought of fighting against democracy or of making a revolution.

The left wing would have then helped in building the earthly paradise of pure democracy by “convincing” the workers that their aim is to obtain democratic rights. But, of course, to “convince” proletarians, words are not enough. So we will see our left humanists assassinate the “provocateurs”. No faction of the bourgeoisie has the privilege of counter-revolutionary cannibalism.

Nevertheless, the earthly paradise cannot last even with the help of the bourgeoisie’s left wing. Lenin was accused of being a German agent, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were killed by the Socialists in the name of democracy, torture was organized under Allende’s regime as much as under Pinochet’s.

But all the capitalists will never be able to stop the struggles, which come back, always more violently, to destroy all democratic illusions. And we, proletarians, will not strike for any right, we will strike for our own material interests, we will fight to take our imprisoned comrades out of the jails of the capitalist State, without making any concession to parliamentarism or amnesty campaigns.

The so-called “Marxists”, in their fight for the purification of democracy, only long for the total submission of the working-class, that means, its disappearance as an autonomous class and its atomization as good citizens.

### **Democratic rights are never a workers’ victory but are always a weapon of the bourgeoisie**

In this text, we have considered separately, for the sake of comprehension, the different aspects of democratic rights and liberties, which, in fact, combine:

A. Pure democracy, a capitalist ideology where there is no class organization but only citizens.

B. Practically, the tendency to purify democracy, which leads historically to the changing of workers into citizens while left and right make them fight for democratic rights and liberties imposed by democratic State terrorism. Any class organization is an attack on democracy.

C. The juridical formalization of unavoidable situations.

D. The formalization tends to overturn the situation to the advantage of the bourgeoisie

Of course, none of those points are on the side of the proletariat. They are all bound: as reference frame (A) can only lead to a situation of relative democratico-terrorist stability (B) and as the strikes become too numerous, the pamphlets and subversive papers become uncontrollable, the bourgeoisie will need to legalize the situation (C). So it authorizes some publications, it legalizes some strikes... it is evident that it aims to break (D) the unity of the “agents of anarchy who do not respect democracy” and that it will find no other solution than to kill them: “now that the strikes are legal, we must be very strict with those who do not respect right of work and who do not care for the interests of our country.”

And they will try to calm the others with crumbs such as the “right to strike”, “of expression”, “of work”,... How many times have we seen that situation?

Each time the bourgeoisie faces a difficult situation, far away from its democratic paradise (A), it formalizes juridically the situation (C), which is a decisive weapon (D) to obtain a normalized situation of democracy (B).

In this remodelled democracy (even if it has been rotten for a long time) the liberal democrats, the syndicalists, the Stalinists, the Trotskyists, the Maoists, the socialists will have the opportunity to meet and congratulate each other on the parliament lobbies: “The

rights of citizenship have been saved... The workers can return to their work and they will soon enjoy their civil rights.”

One need not reach a situation of total political crisis of bourgeois society to understand all this. Nevertheless, it is in such extreme situation that the proletariat will dramatically face the alternative: either accept democracy and counterrevolutionary disaster, or throw away democracy as it has been done in only one historical but limited example: the insurrection of October 1917 in Russia.