

WITH THE PSOE – UNIDAS PODEMOS GOVERNMENT THE SPANISH BOURGEOISIE REMAINS AT THE FOREFRONT OF WORLD EXPLOITATION

As an integral part of European imperialism, Spanish and European capitalism go hand in hand in this crisis characterized, among other things, by the issuance of state and corporate debt. As of today, the ECB is buying some 80 billion of debt each month and the Federal Reserve around 120 billion. In the Spanish state, the debt "(...) in just sixteen months increased by 16.4%, at an average monthly rate of 12,568 million euros, beating one historical record after another with hardly any respite, to exceed 1.42 trillion euros in June, an unprecedented figure (...). This figure is equivalent to 122.1% of GDP. (...) If this rate of slimming were to continue in the future, it would take Spain nearly 23 years to digest the debt accumulated so far during the pandemic alone, (...)." (Expansión, 18-08-2021).

On the one hand, the Spanish economy breaks the debt record and on the other hand, it has just received, in mid-August, "more than 69,500 million to which it opts in direct aid, expandable up to 140,000 million if the Executive also resorts to loans. "Spain has received 9,000 million in pre-financing (...)." (Expansión, 18-08-2021). The remittance of this money is not free of conditions on the part of the lender, "the unblocking of the following tranches will be linked to the execution of projects and structural reforms committed to with the European partners, among which those of the labor market and the public pension system stand out (...)." (Expansión, 18-08-2021). "Precisely, the pension reform is one of the major transformations that Brussels demands from Spain to keep the hose of European funds open." (Expansión, 19-08-2021).

Reduction of unproductive overheads for the bourgeoisie

A pension reform is imposed and they have already started to work on it. Last July, the comment was already slipped by the "Minister of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, José Luis Escrivá (...) that those born in the baby boom generation (between 1958 and 1977) will have to "work a little more" if they do not want to see their pension affected." (El País, 02-07-2021). What the Spanish bourgeoisie is putting on the table is that the explosion suffered by the pension funds of private companies in the US is something that can happen again, but this time with public pension funds worldwide due to the aging of the population. Currently in the Spanish state "(...) for every pensioner there are two people of working age. That is, the 19.5 million people affiliated to Social Security pay the more than 9.8 million pensions that the State pays to 8.9 million pensioners". (Expansión, 19-08-2021). The Bank of Spain has recently published and highlighted that "(...) pensions have a much higher profitability than the growth of the economy, and will therefore attract an increasing proportion of resources. In addition, there are more and more pensioners and when the baby boom generation retires, the current 10 million will increase to 15 million in 2048. (...) As of today, pensions already constitute 31% of the expenditure of all Administrations and 45% of the central Administration's disbursements." (El País, 12-08-2021).

And for the bourgeois state the figures do not add up, since "The Social Security needs help to pay pensions. For the past three years, the State has been lending it billions every year to meet its obligations." (El País, 06-08-2021). What is behind these statements and cries about the accounts that do not work out? The confirmation that the crisis will continue to be brutally unloaded on the backs of the working class, lengthening the

years of contribution or reducing pensions. This capitalist system of production MUST get rid of the increasingly large mass of the working class that is no longer productive (retirees), which is an excessive expense and from which it can no longer appropriate surplus value. How? "Of the nearly 80,000 coronavirus deaths in Spain, 37.5% (just under 30,000) were nursing home inmates, regardless of whether they died in their room or after being taken to the emergency room." (El País, 06-06-2021). These are the figures that the bourgeoisie itself publishes and it must be said loud and clear that the elders were not taken care of and they WERE LEFT TO DIE, locked in their rooms. "Doctors Without Borders denounced, in a report published in August last year, the "abandonment" of the elderly and the shortcomings of the centers (...)." (El País, 06-06-2021). This report explains that most nursing homes "often preferred that the elderly, as long as there were no reliable test results, remain locked in their rooms (...). The result was appalling: a succession of closed doors, sometimes locked, and people banging and begging to get out. A horror." (DWB, August 2020).

This is how the number of pensioners was reduced for the first time in 15 years: "It is observed when comparing pension withdrawals, caused almost exclusively by deaths, during the first nine months of the year (...). They have increased by 13.5%, nearly 50,000 more than in the same period of the previous year." (El País, 25-11-2020). But this is not enough, despite these deaths, what the bourgeoisie sees is the constant increase of pensioners and the corresponding expenditure.

The situation would not seem so serious to them if there were at least a high birth rate to replace those who can no longer be exploited, but this is not the case either. "For the sixth consecutive year, (...) there were more deaths than births." (Expansión, 18-06-2021).

Before the health crisis broke out "public investment in healthcare in Spain fell by half, according to calculations by the Valencian Institute of Economic Research (known by its Spanish acronym IVIE). Specifically, between 2011 and 2018 (latest available data), investment in the public healthcare sector in Spain fell by 50.7%. That means that, as a consequence of depreciations and wear and tear due to the passage of time, in that period the value of public healthcare assets (buildings, machinery or technology) fell by 10.2%." (La Vanguardia, 24-07-2021). The conclusions of the study carried out in El Comunista nº32 (November 1996) on the long-term consequences of the reduction of investment in health care have been fully confirmed. It was materially impossible for the Spanish public health system to respond to the increase of admissions in Intensive Care Units (ICU) since in March 2020 the available beds were 4,404 for the whole Spanish state. A few months later the PSOE-Unidas Podemos government said they would build more hospitals and more such beds. The truth is that no new hospitals have been built (those that were already planned have been completed and the existing ones have been adapted) and many of the beds that have been expanded cannot be put into operation due to the lack of intensivists and adequate technology. There is such a lack of personnel that the vacations of auxiliary personnel cannot be covered and the same story is repeated every year: "The closure of beds is a phenomenon that occurs every summer throughout Spain (...) this summer more than 9,600 beds have been closed, 2,700 more than last year, as reported by the specialized media ConSalud. Thousands of consultations, diagnostic tests and surgical interventions have also been paralyzed in hospitals." (El

País, 18-08-2021). *"Between March and August of last year alone, 93,000 operations were not performed."* (El País, 08-06-2021). This implies that many of these pending operations end up with added complications and/or deaths, although no one bothers to find out: *"The registries in Spain work this badly, we don't know for sure what thousands of people have died of."* (La Vanguardia, 18-10-2020), according to the president of the Spanish Society of Hematology and Hemotherapy.

In the Autonomous Community of Madrid *"the average delay for patients on the structural waiting list for surgery has grown by 63%: from 44.82 days to 73.10. A rise that affects, above all, those who have the most days to go before their surgery arrives."* (El País, 08-06-2021). In primary care, it has been almost impossible to get an appointment for a long time and they have opted to diagnose by telephone and prescribe without having seen the patient or done any tests. There has been a significant increase in the number of applications to receive aid under the Dependency Law, aid which has *"an average monthly amount of 306 euros. The aid to pay for a place in a nursing home does not reach 450 euros per month."* And anyone who intends to receive this assistance should know that he or she will most likely receive it after dying: *"During the last twelve months, the year of the pandemic, 55,375 people died, more than 151 every day, waiting for a response from the Administration or the services and aid."* (La Vanguardia, 16-03-2021). Despite the alleged pandemic context, it does not seem that the European and Spanish bourgeoisies have in mind to prioritize health in the distribution of the billions coming with the Next Generation, which will take less than 3,000 million of the 140,000 euros provided by the EU.

With the PSOE-Unidas Podemos government, the profits of Spain's big employers soar

While it redoubles the pressure on the local working class, Spanish imperialism continues to obtain a large part of its profit from the businesses it has at the international level. In the case of Santander Bank, the profits obtained in the U.S. have gone from 7% in 2019 to 30% in 2021. *"Santander is earmarking 5 billion euros to take over 100% of its subsidiaries in the US and Mexico, which it plans to delist from the stock market."* (Expansión, 25-08-2021). BBVA, on the other hand, is leaving the U.S. to go to other countries: *"Following the exit from the United States, Spain will be the group's only relevant subsidiary in mature economies, further increasing dependence on Mexico and Turkey, which generate almost 45% and 19% of the group's profit, respectively."* (Expansión, 17-11-2020). In 2019 BBVA obtained 42% of Mexico and 9.2% of Turkey. And there has not only been profit for these two entities: *"Large banks - Santander, BBVA, CaixaBank, Sabadell and Bankinter - earned nearly €7,825 million in the first quarter of 2021, compared to losses in the previous year, due to lower provisions to deal with the pandemic and the positive impact of the CaixaBank and Bankia merger."* (La Vanguardia, 10-05-2021). Indeed, it has contributed to the fact that *"(...) the wave of mergers will lead to a practically record workforce reduction this year in Spain. If we add the departures announced as a result of the reduction in the workforce due to the layoffs in progress (Santander España, Ibercaja), early retirement plans in progress (Sabadell) and adjustments derived from mergers in process, the number of departures could be around 17,300 people, around 10% of the total workforce"*. (Expansión, 06-04-2021). *"it should be remembered that personnel expenses represent more than half of the total operating expenses of banks (...)"*. (La Vanguardia, 19-04-2021) so it is more than likely that they will continue with the layoffs in this sector as they still have room for maneuver:

"(...) Spain continues to be one of the countries with the densest banking network in the world, with just over 45.5 offices per 100,000 adults, according to IMF data." (La Vanguardia, 08-09-2021). *"Banking has been destroying jobs since the financial crisis of 2008. In total 100,00 since then."* (El País, 03-09-2021).

In the **energy sector**, a race has been unleashed to occupy the top positions and obtain aid since the decision was taken by the major world bourgeoisies, and specifically by the German bourgeoisie at European level, to openly support renewable energies in an attempt to leave behind dependence on oil. Spanish companies could not be less and, for the time being, they are well positioned: *"All the energy companies are trying to position themselves in the United States in the green energy market. At the moment, Iberdrola has a portfolio of 13 GW; Naturgy, 12 GW, and Acciona already has 1,000 megawatts in operation. (...)"* (La Vanguardia, 14-05-2021). Also, in the **pharmaceutical sector** and in the health sector, fierce competition has been unleashed by the increase in demand in this sector and specifically with vaccines. As an example, the Catalan multinational Grifols, which *"is moving ahead with the production of a hyperimmune immunoglobulin as a potential passive immunization therapy against Covid-19 at its plant in North Carolina (USA)."* (La Vanguardia, 21-07-2020). *"Grifols has closed a deal with the Egyptian state-owned company National Service Projects Organization (...) The operation will allow Grifols to strengthen its presence in the Middle East and Africa, after consolidating its presence in the USA, Europe and with the Chinese bet"*. (La Vanguardia, 25-11-2020).

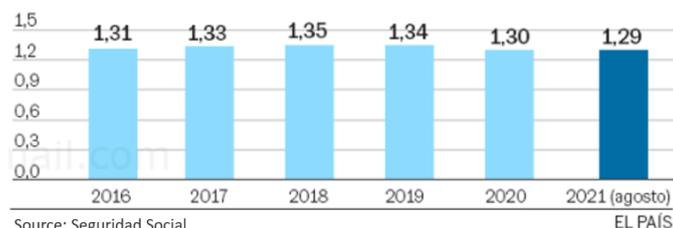
As we can see, all the businesses of the Catalan big bourgeoisie, a central part of the Spanish bourgeoisie, are making profits and that is why they continue with the plan to deactivate the pro-independence movement. This deactivation was initiated when the sector of the bourgeoisie represented by the PP-Rajoy was removed and replaced by the government of the false left PSOE-Unidas Podemos (umpteenth re-edition of the bourgeois Popular Front) with the aim of avoiding internal confrontations in the Spanish State which would scare away their businesses. The president of Foment del Treball (the main Catalan Employer's Organization) and vice-president of the CEOE (Spanish Confederation of Employer's Organizations) *"(...) Josep Sánchez Llibre, went even further. He not only supported the pardons, but also assured that the "normalization" of relations between the central and Catalan Executives will lead to the return in "months" or "years" of the more than 7,000 firms that since 2017 have moved their headquarters to another autonomous region (...)"* (Expansión, 18-06-2021). The president of the CEOE also publicly supported them. On the economic front, Catalonia began to lose steam as soon as the first pro-independence consultations began, a moment when *"(...) Madrid surpasses Catalonia for the first time in 2014, the year of the first illegal 9-N consultation promoted by Artur Mas, (...) Among the companies that have moved their headquarters from Catalonia to Madrid since 1-0 2017 are CaixaBank, Sabadell, Gas Natural Fenosa, Cellnex, Abertis, Colonial, Catalana Occidente, (...)"* (Expansión, 23-08-2021). And more recently *"Madrid collects 1.1 billion more than Catalonia in personal income tax."* (Expansión, 07-09-2021). The pardons to the visible heads of the small and medium Catalan bourgeoisie are the deflating of the Catalan "soufflé". But the pardons did not include the payment of the bill for the expenses of the "procés" and the representatives of the centralist Spanish bourgeoisie opposed to the "reconciliation" with the peripheral bourgeoisies use the means at their disposal (Court of Auditors, Supreme Court) to continue pressuring the government bloc and

Basque-Catalan nationalism: *"the refusal of the Spanish banks to guarantee the bonds requested by the Court of Auditors to some thirty senior officials for having allocated public money to internationalize the pro-independence movement between 2011 and 2017. In total, justice claims them 5.4 million euros, which they must pay today at the latest (...)." (Expansión, 21-07-2021).* With the arrest in Sardinia of the former president of the Generalitat of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, on September 23rd, this puppet also manages not to fall into oblivion when the cycle of the so-called "procés" is already concluding, at least for a while. At social level, the support has become almost testimonial since *"If in 2014 the demonstrations in favor of the rupture came to congregate 1.8 million people, according to the Generalitat, this year the march gathered 400,000 attendees, according to the organization, and 108,000 participants, according to the local police of Barcelona." (Expansión, 14-09-2021).*

The fight of an important part of this sector of the small and medium bourgeoisie that attends these demonstrations is to avoid their imminent transition to the proletariat, to survive the slaughter of the middle classes in order to continue sucking the profits of others, on this occasion, from the pot of aid from European imperialism and in particular from Spanish imperialism where *"The Council of Ministers yesterday approved an extension of the coverage period of direct aid of 7,000 million (...). Thus, the self-employed and companies will be able to use the aid to satisfy debts and make payments to suppliers and other creditors, financial and non-financial, as well as to offset the fixed costs incurred, including accounting losses, provided that they have been generated within the established period and come from contracts prior to March 13, 2021 (...)." (Expansión, 15-09-2021).* The State at the service of the Employers and the State as the ideal collective capitalist, as Marx and Engels already stated in 1848 in the Manifesto of the Communist Party: *"The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."*

This is the evolution of the number of companies in Spain:

Registered companies in Spain. In millions.



A very large part of this million or so companies will have to succumb to the crisis, in the process of capital concentration: *"Ninety-nine percent of Spanish companies do not even reach the definition of medium-sized (between 50 and 249 employees) and 82.81% have less than three people on staff." (El País, 17-10-2021).*

Since the onset of the "health" crisis in March 2020, the Spanish government has been dedicated to provide abundant and cheap credit to companies: *"The line of public guarantees set up by the Official Credit Institute (ICO) to alleviate the crisis caused by the covid pandemic ended in 2020 providing 114,647 million euros of financing to Spanish companies. (...) The main beneficiaries of this aid have been the smallest companies and the self-employed". (La Vanguardia, 13-01-2021).* A report by BBVA Research estimates that *"The measures deployed in recent months to protect the productive fabric have prevented between 3,000 and 15,000 more companies from entering bankruptcy proceedings." (La Vanguardia, 16-04-2021).* One of the star measures, due to the advantages offered to companies, has been the ERTes (furloughs). These proceedings are the ideal

framework to be able to do and undo as the company pleases. To begin with, many of the ERTes that have been filed since March were in violation of the law. The companies, both public and private, have rushed to violate any regulation in this respect because they know that the probability of being discovered and fined by the Labor Inspection is very low. To give an estimated figure: *"The Labor Inspection has detected that there are 20,000 companies in which the temporary employment regulation file (ERTE) could be being used fraudulently." (La Vanguardia, 02-07-2021).* This, translated into reality, means that the number is much higher. The companies that have made layoffs, even if they were not allowed, do not have much to fear either, bourgeois justice is on their side: *"The Superior Court of Catalonia endorses an ERE [layoff] of 1,000 people by Covid despite the ban." (Expansión, 25-02-2021),* as well as the Labor and Social Security Inspection, which *"considers that the "loss of the totality of the exonerations of social contributions [for all the workers covered by an ERTE] in the event of the dismissal of one of the affected employees would be an excessively burdensome consequence for the company in view of the breach of the safeguarding of employment." Inspection has informed the General Labor Directorate that "(...) the Inspection is not authorized to demand from the company the totality of the amount that the defaulting company may have deducted from the social contributions." (Expansión, 20-01-2021).* After a few months of pause, the Redundancy Plans (collective layoffs, known as ERE) were reactivated and layoffs began. In Catalonia alone: *"According to data from the Generalitat, between January and February a total of 4,500 people dismissed through an ERE were counted. (...) is equivalent to the sum of all those dismissed in the years 2017 and 2018." (La Vanguardia, 17-03-2021).* And companies can rest easy as long as they have union services companies in their offices signing whatever is put in front of them: *"El Corte Inglés and the unions have resolved by fast track the first ERE in the history of the company. (...) adjustment plan that will affect 3,292 workers." (El País, 24-03-2021).* The union services company UGT is leading the rest of the Employers and in June presented a redundancy plan in Catalonia to lay off 45 of its employees.

What does it mean for the working class to be in a temporary employment regulation file (ERTE, i.e., in a furlough)? *"The specific number of workers who, despite being in an ERTE, are not receiving unemployment benefits, is one of the great unknowns of this crisis. (...) the cause of the incidents is in the origin of the file, which are the spreadsheets that the companies send to process the ERTE. "All the errors are confusions on the part of the companies: misplaced ID cards, incorrect account numbers, missing data..." (El País, 01-07-2020).* *"Despite the fact that in recent months there has been an improvement in the processing, the data from March to October still shows that 68,000 people have not received ERTE benefits in Catalonia. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Labor, between March and October 1.3 million people received an employment benefit, 809,424 of them as ERTE. (...) in the province of Barcelona, where the number of files is very high, it has taken up to four months to collect unemployment benefits". (El País, 14-12-2020).* It means NOT GETTING PAID for months, getting paid wrong and late and not being able to claim because the unemployment offices have been closed and not answering the phones, working overtime, even though it is not allowed, carrying more workload because the employer does not disengage the entire workforce.... There is a very high number of working-class families who cannot pay their bills and who have serious problems to do the shopping, to assume the expenses of

schooling, to buy medicines... This contrasts with what the bourgeois press has been publishing on the savings of Spanish families: *"Spanish household savings by 60,807 million euros in 2020, to exceed 108,800 million in the year as a whole (14.7% of gross disposable income), more than double that of 2019."* (Expansión, 21-05-2021). The families that have been able to save have been those of the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy, those who cannot find a place to invest. The working-class lives from day to day and has to pay debts due to unpaid rents, mortgages and bills. *"More than three million people were in 2020 in severe material deprivation, according to the National Institute of Statistics. The indicator measures how many of those surveyed cannot afford four items from a list of nine, which includes not being able to eat meat or fish at least every other day, having delays in housing-related payments, inability to meet unforeseen expenses or to keep the house at the right temperature. That's one million more than in 2019."* (Expansion, 18-08-2021). *"Since 2018, the number of people in severe poverty has increased by a whopping 50%, rising to six million. (...) there are already eleven million people in social exclusion in Spain, 2.5 million more than in 2018."* (La Vanguardia, 07-10-2021). And in the event that there had been some savings, what happens is that instead of being able to consume more products, the money ends up being spent on buying products of habitual use that are now more expensive. *"Last August the consumer price index (CPI) rose to 3.3%, its highest rate since October 2012."* (Expansión, 15-09-2021). Fresh fruit and vegetables, oil and eggs have become more expensive, also *"fuels, with increases of 20.9% in gasoline and 18.5% in diesel. Not to mention the 32% increase in liquid fuels and the 20.8% increase in liquefied hydrocarbons, i.e., butane and propane. (...)"* (Expansión, 15-09-2021). These increases have repercussions on electricity bills *"in August soared by no less than 34.9% compared to a year ago (...)"* (Expansión, 15-09-2021). The result of not being able to repay the mortgage loan to the bank has been that *"The number of foreclosures entered (both habitual residence and other real estate), 20,460, is 17.5% higher than 2019, being the first year-on-year uptick since 2012."* (El País, 08-09-2021). This contrasts with the government's treatment of entrepreneurs in the law that is pending approval, with which *"Entrepreneurs may protect their primary residence and all their personal assets in bankruptcy proceedings."* (El País, 19-07-2021).

The State of the bosses is trying to protect its own class, given that the crisis is ruining and will ruin a whole series of businessmen and threatening them with being thrown into the ranks of the proletariat. An example will serve to illustrate the real content of organizations like the Platform of People Affected by the Mortgage (PAH) and how, all these semi-bankrupt petty-bourgeois elements dull the senses of the proletariat in their desperate attempt to resist proletarianization. The example is published by a bourgeois newspaper and is there for all to see and hear. It is about a construction businesswoman: *"created a company, built and sold around 50 villas and 200 houses in the western area of Madrid, the highest income area."* (El País, 09-10-2021). This businesswoman whose speculative and criminal business stopped working with the bursting of the mortgage bubble, has been evicted from her modest 540m² villa with a plot of 2.600m² and is now a member of the PAH, where they have no qualms in admitting that: *"In the past, this type of profile, with high incomes, was more common in the PAH. With the 2008 crisis came a lot of mortgaged people: middle class, businessmen and self-employed."* (El País, 08-10-2021). Hence the support and media hype that these organizations receive and the

tremendous hindrance that they represent, adhering like leeches to the trunk of the proletariat to try to climb back on to the top from which they have fallen.

To all this must be added the recent publication of the draft General State Budget for 2022 (pending parliamentary approval), completely continuist, in which the supposedly left-wing government maintains the ceiling of taxation to employers that has existed for years: *"The main novelty is the establishment of a minimum corporate tax rate of 15%. This tax floor, however, will affect less than 1% of the companies, the largest ones, and, as it will be applied to the taxable base, it will have little impact on tax collection."* (El País, 07-10-2021).

The meager increases in the Interprofessional Minimum Wage (IMW) and the redoubling of workers' exploitation

In El Comunista no. 61 of December 2018 we published that: *"On July 5th, 2018, the Employers (CEOE-CEPYME) and the union services companies (CCOO-UGT) signed the so-called "IV agreement for employment and collective bargaining" with which a ceiling of 2% (plus a variable part of 1%) was placed on wage increases. This State agreement approved the increase of the Minimum Wage to 1.000€ per month in 2020, starting from 737€ in 2018, with the support of the Rajoy government (...)"*

But the PSOE-Unidos Podemos government gives a propaganda coup and, by decree, raises the minimum wage to €900 from January 1st, 2019. Thus, they erase from memory the €1,000 increase agreed when Rajoy was in power. We must understand that the current government seeks not to have to raise the Minimum Wage in 2020 to €1,000, but to raise it by 2%, 3% or 4% (which would be increases of €18, €27 or €36 respectively) leaving it at €918, €927 or €936 instead of the €1,000 in January 2020. (...) we will wait to see what these great trapeze artists with nets and the background music of parliamentary cretinism will do in January 2020". In January 2020 the minimum wage was €900, in February 2020 it is retroactively raised to €950. September 2021: *"The Government and the trade unions closed last night an agreement to raise the minimum interprofessional wage (IMW) by 15 euros until December of this year. That is to say, this income would go from 950 to 965 euros per month. In relative terms, this represents an increase of 1.6%."* (Expansión, 17-09-2021). **A 15 miserable euro increase.** And, in view of this announcement, SMEs have come out to warn and cry that this could destroy up to 130,000 jobs (Expansión, 15-09-2021). *¿Do they forget that "Yesterday, the Council of Ministers approved an extension of the deadline for coverage of direct aid of 7,000 million for the self-employed and SMEs."?* (Expansión, 15-09-2021). In the Spanish state there are about 4 million unemployed, of which 1 million are very long-term unemployed. *"One million people between 16 and 29 years of age are unemployed, 30% of its working population."* (Expansión, 18-06-2021). For this mass of unemployed *"Labor Ministry proposes unemployment assistance of around 452 euros."* (La Vanguardia, 10-05-2021).

The bourgeois press published in August 2021 a study on the "lost" working days, in millions, from 2015 and up to the second quarter of 2021. It can be seen that the bourgeoisie as a whole had been losing *"each quarter about 30 million working days due to illness, accident or temporary disability, according to the average of the five years prior to the coronavirus" and that this figure "began to increase in the first quarter of 2020, soaring in the second quarter, and grew strongly again at the beginning of this year to 54.5 million working days lost due to illness."* (Expansión, 19-08-2021).

Here we have to see that the capitalist system itself is in charge, by the mere wear and tear of daily exploitation, of causing the loss of 30 million working days and that then the rise is not so great. The increase of lost working days, mainly those derived from Covid-19 due to real sick leave and preventive confinements, is a fact and hinders the progress and profitability of the enterprises: "(...) *The most devastating fact is that for each worker infected by coronavirus, Spanish companies have had to take an average of 55.4 days of sick leave, far in excess of the development of the disease. This is due to the fact that, in addition to sick leave due to illness, there have been numerous absences due to isolation of close contacts of those infected.*" (Expansión, 19-08-2021). If we compare the 54.5 million days lost due to illness, accident or temporary disability with the 210,000 days lost due to strike since 2020 we see that the strike has had very little impact. This figure is an objective demonstration of the current disorganization and weakness of the working class. In a period in which in the Spanish state "(...) *there were more than 3.6 million workers in ERTE at the same time (...). In fact, at the end of July there were still 331,486 workers in this situation, of which more than 70% have their contracts totally suspended. In addition, 1.2 million workers lost their jobs in the second quarter of last year.*" (Expansión, 19-08-2021). Labor killings, however, continued to increase: "*Despite an unprecedented slump in economic activity due to measures to combat the pandemic, a total of 708 workers lost their lives in work-related accidents in 2020 (...) This figure, still provisional, represents 13 deaths more than the previous year (+1.9%).*" (La Vanguardia, 13-02-2021).

To recover class unionism, to introduce the communist program in the immediate struggle

The explanation for the lack of proletarian response is to be found in the total and absolute control exercised over the working class by the subsidized trade unionism and the false left that deceive and subject the working class to their interests.

As the crisis progresses, these trade union service companies will have to act as an escape valve, they will have to provide an outlet for certain situations in order to control them and prevent them from getting out of control, it is their job and that is why they are paid by the State and the Employers. Gradually we will see how they will increase their activity by calling strikes, demonstrations and rallies and with a greater staging and change in the language they have been using. Recently we have seen how Matías Carnero (president of the SEAT works council and of the UGT of Catalonia) was appointed member of the Volkswagen Supervisory Board saying that "(...) *This is a good moment to reinforce the role of the class unions, I say this very clearly, not unions that come out of nowhere, for party interests or whatever. When I speak of class unions, I am talking about the UGT and CCOO and all together we have an important role in society.*" (El Diari del Treball, 30-03-2021).

It is fundamental for the bourgeoisie the effective imprisonment of the organs of immediate struggle within the business networks and the bourgeois State, maintaining the mirage or the screen that they continue to be "class unions" when they are in reality **union service companies**. For those who have not seen it clearly yet, the XII Congress of CCOO has just been held, with the invitation and stellar participation of... Antonio Garamendi, president of the CEOE! The so-called class union invites nothing more and nothing less than the spokesman of the Spanish bourgeoisie... and what was his intervention? "*for us, you are not the bogeymen* [it's a pun with the acronym of CCOO, also called "cocos", bogeymen], *you are the Comisiones*

Obreras (...) Thank you very much, good luck. Congratulations Unai [Unai Sordo, re-elected secretary general of CCOO in this congress], *I would also like to greet Mari Cruz, the teams, Carlos, so many people around here who usually sit at the tables and simply, and encourage you, I insist that this fluid dialogue is what is going to make us move forward. Besides, I see that progress is being made because even before I have seen Agustín who has already put on his collar shirt, I believe that this is moving forward little by little and we are reaching an agreement*". The Ministers of Labor and Economy also attended as guests.

In addition to the control exercised by these criminals, the Employers have taken advantage of the stoppage of total and partial lockouts to attack the organized workforces or to repress the workforces that have gone on strike.

During this period, some of the companies in which strikes could have been called were in a half-closed or totally closed situation. In this situation of stoppage, the strength of the strike was greatly reduced.

Despite all these difficulties, there have been a few strikes with a class-based approach organized by the small class-based union, Solidarity and Union of the Workers (SUT), which broke with this control and managed to protest publicly. The first of the strikes called during this period was at a municipal sports center where the workers had not been paid their salaries or benefits for three months. In August a strike began at La Pedrera in Barcelona, at the end of September a strike was called at Sagrada Familia and shortly afterwards, at the beginning of October, a strike was called at Casa Batlló. The last strike called by this union was that of the MUEC in May 2021. A situation is reproduced in which the strikes that are initiated spread geographically or sequentially, thus showing that groups of the working class feel pushed to struggle, but the very situation of the half stoppage of the Employers in certain sectors takes away the strength of these struggles and gives the Employers room for maneuver to use the tool of the lockout.

Being aware of these limitations, it is undeniable that in the present situation of crushing social control it is very important that groups of workers break this control, demonstrate publicly and project from these struggles a class position in the street, openly rejecting any solidarity with the company itself and attacking it even when it is doing badly economically, surpassing or tending to surpass the limits of the companies and sectors. For this reason, the militants and sympathizers of the Party must encourage the serious preparation and carrying out of these struggles. This must be done without ever carrying out actions merely scenic or doomed to failure, always taking into account the whole of the forces seeking not to exhaust them and that the experiences lived by the groups of workers in struggle be as deep as possible in the political sense.

"The task of the party during unfavorable periods when the proletariat is reduced to passivity is to foresee the forms and encourage the emergence of organizations for carrying out the immediate struggle for economic defense. In the future such organizations may assume entirely new aspects, possibly different from the already well-known type of trade unions, industrial unions, factory councils and so on. The party always encourages forms of organizations that facilitate contact and common action between workers from different localities and different occupations, while it rejects closed forms." (Characteristic Theses of the Party, 1951).

The rulings of the bourgeois courts are more and more blatantly favorable to the Employers and directly aimed at hindering the development of class organization. The Labor Inspection has tangibly changed its action towards these strikes

with classist approaches, refusing to act, validating company actions which, according to bourgeois legality and the Labor Inspection's own previous action, would be illegal, and reducing the fines to a tenth of those it imposed previously. We must welcome this process of progressive unmasking of bourgeois institutions and the experiences that groups of workers in struggle can draw from the direct perception of the real function of these institutions is very important.

In today's amorphous environment, every small or medium-sized struggle is a great opportunity for some individuals in the group of workers to have the ingredients to break with their ideology of origin and also for the group as a whole to keep a memory or a reference to contact us again in future situations or struggles. This is only possible if the experience (even if it is a defeat) is fruitful, if the development that the events will follow has been anticipated, if the true character of all the agents of the bourgeoisie interacting with the strike or struggle in progress (parliamentarians, subsidized unions, platforms, labor inspection, mediators, court, media, etc.) has been anticipated, and if quality is given priority over quantity (better less, but better).

This work is developed taking into account Marx's warning in "Wages, Price and Profit" and the perspective of trade union intervention outlined in the theses of the Party: it must not involve such an absorption that it prevents the development of political work and must serve above all to introduce the slogan of the abolition of wage labor and the Marxist approach within the working class, it must be an integral part of our activity without attributing to it the character of an end in itself, acquiring and helping to acquire through it the experiences and trainings for the useful and effective revolutionary preparation.

*"(...) the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. **They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights** incessantly springing up from the never ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market.*

*They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto: "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" **they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: "Abolition of the wages system!"***" (Wages, Price and Profit, K. Marx, 1865).

*"The work of propagating its ideology and proselytizing for its ranks which the party continuously carries on is thus **inseparable from the reality of the proletariat's activity and movement in all its myriad forms**. It is a banal error to see as contradictory: participation in struggles for contingent and limited objectives, and the preparation of the final and general revolutionary struggle. The very existence of the party's unitary organism, with its indispensable conditions of clarity of programmatic vision and solidity of organizational discipline, gives a guarantee that partial demands will never be accorded the value of ends in themselves, and that the struggle to fulfil them will only be seen as **a means of experience and training for useful and effective revolutionary preparation**."* (Theses of Rome, 1922).

Faced with the disfigurement and systematic falsification of Marxism by the bourgeoisie and its satellite organizations, it is fundamental that, in the atmosphere of immediate struggle, during the strike, readings of classic texts of Marxism are introduced and carried out: "Wage Labour and Capital", of the "Manifesto of the Communist Party", of "Wages, Price and Profit", etc. The experience lived in these strikes or the experiences transmitted in the workers' assemblies, in the class union, provide extremely useful material for the understanding of Marxism and the denunciation of its falsifications. It is important to remind that *"the world of opinions alone [...] in the eyes of Marxists is a false world as long as it is not treated as a superstructure of the world of economic conflicts"* (Theses of Naples, 1965). The confidence gained in the world of material class conflict through our actions in the preparation, organization and maintenance of struggles serves to be able to make an organized and focused study to understand the text to the maximum instead of being a madhouse or a highbrow debate between coffee charlatans.

As communists we must denounce and oppose all the attacks described above and those to come, prepare and organize groups of workers to assume the approach of the struggle for the maintenance and improvement of working and living conditions, organizing and consolidating the class union, rejecting subsidies and to be fully released from work (liberado sindical) as well as any support (which will always be poisoned) of parliamentary cretinism, denouncing the repressive, exploitative and reactionary character of all governments and especially of the so-called "left" ones (like the one currently at the head of the Spanish government), permanent defenders of a rotten and outdated system that we must destroy and bury together with its defenders.