

## LET'S BREAK THE STRAIGHT-JACKET OF INTEGRATED "TRADE UNIONISM", BOUND TO THE BOURGEOIS STATE

### What are central banks fighting against?

In the comments and decisions of the central banks (Fed, ECB, BoE) there is a repeated refrain: the evolution of the "labor market". In short, a "strong" labor market (with a lot of demand for jobs and few unemployed) is a problem for the bourgeoisie and the interest rate hikes are aimed at trying to make hiring more difficult in order to rebalance the balance of supply and demand in favor of the management and to slow down wage rises. More or less explicitly, everyone has said it: *"The ECB advocates raising interest rates further to curb wage rises."* (Expansión, 07-03-2023).

### The excuse and the real reason

The excuse of the central banks (to prevent wage increases to cause inflation) was already refuted in 1865 by K. Marx. But this does not mean that they do not have a very concrete and well-founded (bourgeois) class interest in acting against wage rises. In the refutation we find the explanation of this class interest of the bourgeoisie: *"A general rise of wages would, therefore, result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but not affect values."* (Value, Price and Profit, K. Marx).

### Surplus value and the labor force commodity

One of the most important scientific discoveries for the working class is that the only source of profit is **surplus value**, obtained through the exploitation of the working class:

*"In our present-day capitalist society, labor power is a commodity like any other, and yet quite a peculiar commodity. It has, namely, the peculiar property of being a value-creating power, a source of value and, indeed, with suitable treatment, a source of more value than it itself possesses. With the present state of production, human labor power not only produces in one day a greater value than it itself possesses and costs; with every new scientific discovery, with every new technical invention, this surplus of its daily product over its daily cost increases, and therefore that portion of the labor day in which the worker works to produce the replacement of his day's wage decreases; consequently, on the other hand, that portion of the labor day in which he **has to make a present** of his labor to the capitalist without being paid for it increases."* (Introduction by F. Engels to Wage Labor and Capital).

### The contradictions of the current situation

Capitalism is still immersed in a series of contradictions that we have been showing in "The Internationalist Proletarian" n°9 (p. 12 and 13) and in "The Internationalist Proletarian" n°10 (p.28).

On the one hand, the bourgeoisie is concerned about a persistent labor shortage in certain sectors, a reduction in hours worked per worker and in the employed population, while at the same time unemployment rates remain low (in the US they have reached 3.5%, a 40-year low). At the same time, a wave of massive layoffs is taking place, starting in the technology sector but expanding in general to other sectors of the labor aristocracy and which, at the end of this first quarter of 2023, between the US and Europe, reached the sum of *"158,000 layoffs, of which at least 21,000 (13%) were in Europe, compared to 10% in January"*. (Expansión, 10-04 -2023).

As a result of inflation, there has been a wave of strikes worldwide, mostly in sections of the labor aristocracy but not only,

which has put upward pressure (although insufficiently) on wages. And, while there is an exponential increase in robotization (see p.23 of "The Internationalist Proletarian" n°11), the population is ageing, and the birth rate is falling.

### Relative surplus laboring population

Capitalism needs to produce and produces an industrial reserve army for the needs of expansion of its accumulation process and as a condition of life of its own regime: *"(...) a surplus laboring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, (...) a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army (...) Independently of the limits of the actual increase of population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation."* (Capital, Volume I, Section 7, Chapter XXIII, K. Marx). It is precisely the shortage of this reserve industrial army in certain sectors that torments the bourgeoisie, but it is not the only one.

### The bourgeoisie is incompatible with society

In addition to this industrial reserve army that moves in and out of production, capitalism generates an ever-increasing mass of unproductive workers for the purposes of capitalist accumulation. This system, which is based on the exploitation of the working class, is forced to feed them, even though miserably, through subsidies, benefits, and pensions. This is not a new or unforeseen phenomenon: *"(...) the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him."* (Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848).

Capitalism has already shown with the crematorium ovens during the Second World War what its ultimate solution to this contradiction is and part of the bourgeoisie is aware of it: *"The FMI demands, among other measures, that benefits be cut, and the retirement age be delayed in view of "the risk of people living longer than expected. "'* (El País, 11-04-2012).

### For the abolition of wage labor

As long as capitalism exists, labor-power will be a commodity subject to the laws presiding over the anarchy of mercantile production: *"The condition of existence of capital is wage-labour"* (Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848). These laws include the periodic necessity of the destruction of the productive forces already created and of the commodities produced in excess, also of the commodity labor-power.

We will only put an end to this situation when we put an end to the commodity character of the labor force of the working class: *"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 economic 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!**"*" (Value, Price and Profit, K. Marx, 1865).

## The need of class unionism

From its beginnings Marxism has made clear the close and necessary relationship between the immediate struggle (with its limitations) whose organ is the Class Union and the revolutionary perspective whose organ is the Communist Party.

*"Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time.*

***The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers.***

*(...) This organization of the proletarians into a class, and, consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier."* (Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848).

*"(...) is this saying that the working-class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. (...) **By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.**"* (Value, Price and Profit, 1865, K. Marx).

The meaning of these passages is as profound as striking: a class that drags along an existence of humiliation, that is run over and crushed without even feeling the impulse to rebel and undertake the immediate struggle against this situation, is incapable of abolishing the slavery to which it is subjected.

## One more example of pestilent integration

Whereas the last CCOO congress in Spain was attended by the chief of the Employers Association (CEOE) (see p.8 of "The Internationalist Proletarian" n°8), the last CGIL congress was attended by the President of the Italian Government. For some, the reason for the scandal is the parliamentary affiliation of the aforesaid: the folklorically philo-fascist party Brothers of Italy. The presence of the Spanish Minister of Labor (member of the falsely named Communist Party of Spain), who also participated, would be a reason for applause. However, beyond the different parliamentary varnish of the two speakers, **their political essence is the same** and is well summarized by the Italian president: *"But today is March 17<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of National Unity. (...) With this presence, this debate, today we can truly try to celebrate national unity. Because unity is not the annulment of opposition, which has an educational role for any community. Unity is the higher interest, the common destiny that gives meaning to the contrast". It had been 27 years since no prime minister had attended and spoken at the CGIL congress. (...) the outgoing secretary, called her a few weeks ago and invited her to the meeting. "The union dialogues with everyone without prejudice" (...)"* (El País, 18-03-2023).

This is just one more sign of the pestilent integration of the large so-called trade union organizations and of the complete loss of their character as class unions.

All the animals in the parliamentary zoo act according to the social-political content of the Fascist Labor Charter (1927), the basis of all current European and world labor legislation: *"In collective labor contracts, the solidarity of the various factors of production finds its concrete expression in the reconciliation of the opposing interests of employers and workers, and in their subordination to the superior interests of production"*.

## Fascism: military defeated but socially vanquisher

Since the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world slaughter, it was clear that: *"(...) the trade union dynamics continues to develop uninterruptedly in the full sense of state control and inclusion in the official administrative instances. Fascism, dialectical realizer of the old reformist instances, carried out that of the legal recognition of the trade union so that it could be the holder of the collective agreements with the bosses to the point of the effective imprisonment of any trade union organization in the articulations of the bourgeois class power. This result is fundamental for the defense and preservation of the capitalist regime precisely because the influence and use of trade unionist framing is an indispensable stage for any revolutionary movement led by the communist party."* (Revolutionary Party and Economic Action, 1951).

And this has been the Party's assessment, without hesitation, since the reconstitution of the C.G.L. as C.G.I.L.: *"it cannot dissimulate that not even the confederation that remains with the social-communists of Nenni and Togliatti is based on class autonomy. **It is not a red organization, it is also a tricolor organization STITCHED ACCORDING TO THE MODEL OF MUSSOLINI.**"* (The Trade Union Splits in Italy, 1949).

## Convicted inside the integrated trade union prison?

While some want to make us renounce the union organization by handing it over to the ruling class, others want to lock us inside the integrated union prison. Neither one thing nor the other.

Already the theses of the International make clear that, although we are not scissionists by principle in the trade union plane, the communists: *"5. (...) ought not to hesitate before a split in such organizations, if a refusal to split would mean abandoning revolutionary work in the trade unions, and giving up the attempt to make of them and instrument of revolutionary struggle, the attempt to organize the most exploited part of the proletariat".* (II Congress of the Communist International, 1920).

The Characteristic Theses of our Party, after stating that *"7. The party never adopts the method of forming partial economic organizations comprising only workers who accept the principles and leadership of the communist party"*, impose a task to the militants and to the Party themselves: *"(...) It is the task of the party, in unfavorable periods and periods of passivity of the proletarian class, to foresee the forms and encourage the appearance of organizations with economic objectives for the immediate struggle, which may even assume totally new aspects in the future, after the well-known types of corporation, industrial union, company council, etc. (...)"* (Characteristic Theses, 1951).

The **function of integrated unionism** is to control any small glimmer of class organization even for the immediate struggle: to integrate it, and if it resists, to betray it and stifle it.

The **function of communists** is the opposite: to stimulate this immediate struggle without ceasing to show its limitations, to politically elevate the workers who undertake it, to link it with the higher objective of the abolition of wage labor, of the communist revolution. If we – Marxists – desert this function, only the action of opportunism remains and the seams of the Mussolinian straitjacket cannot be broken.

This function can only be done today by **ORGANIZING THE CLASS UNION, OUTSIDE AND AGAINST THE TRADE UNION PRISON OF THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT** for which the denominations of democratic or subsidized trade unionism, HR branch, trade union services company, etc. are valid.