

Against Exploitation, Let's Block the Economy!¹

“In times of crisis you want to step up strike action? You'll pay for that...”

Union leadership, employers and right-wing as well as left-wing governments, share the same sense of responsibility. In the name of “economic realism”, we should accept the necessity of an always harder exploitation. This is the ideological weapon systematically used against whoever rebels against this system.

“In times of crisis you want to block the economy? You will have to take layoffs upon yourself...”

In the name of this kind of false obvious facts, some union leadership don't even ask that the reform be withdrawn. Others, for tactical reasons, ask for the withdrawal, but refuse to give themselves the means through a real balance of forces: through the general strike, blocking, sabotaging, etc. The unions, which pretend to speak in the name of the workers, have a function: to manage jointly this class society through negotiation and mediation.

Today, the unions are in the forefront and they try by all means to control and to contain the protest, while monopolizing the broad lines of the workers' demands. The main issue is to prevent a stepping up of the struggle: each communiqué of Chèrèque² and Thibault³ mentions their fear about the disputes to race out of control.

Indeed, there are many workers who spend their life while working themselves to death for the bosses and who don't want to fight only to preserve the remnants left by the bourgeois. There are also many who are not concerned directly by the reform: RMists⁴ and unemployed, contract workers, casual workers, undocumented, “lycéens”⁵, and students to whom the labour market won't allow to contribute the necessary years, pensioners getting a starvation pension, etc. All these nevertheless certainly intend to take part to the burgeoning movement. We are many to wait from a social movement more than an adjustment of an umpteenth law, or even its withdrawal. We are many to want that a real balance of forces is established beyond the sham strikes that materialize with the processions in the street between “Republic” and “Nation”⁶.

Since the beginning of the mobilizations, whereas the media persist in wretchedly keeping on repeating and drawing up columns of figures, a certain number of initiatives flourish through the country in margin of the “Unitarian marches”.

So, during the previous day of strike, on September the 23rd:

¹ [All the notes are translator's notes] Originally published in French: [Contre l'exploitation, bloquons l'économie!](#), on Sunday October 10th 2010, translated by [Prolétaires Internationalistes](#).

² CFDT union leader.

³ CGT union leader.

⁴ Persons receiving welfare payment.

⁵ High school students, which are since decades a combative sector in the class struggles in France.

⁶ Classical and official route for all union demonstrations in Paris between both squares.

In Amiens, the salaried of the North industrial zone block their workplace all the day long, whereas go-slows⁷ are organized in the entire region.

In the region of Nantes, workers block the roads while demonstrators wall in the UMP⁸ office of Basse-Goulaine.

Around Chôlet, the Struggle Committee for the Pensions (CLR) organizes an operation free toll on the motorway A87.

In Saint-Nazaire furious demonstrators violently clash with the police.

This same week of September the 23rd, in Marseille, several movements of renewable strike are launched: canteens, cashiers of supermarkets, etc.

In Fos-sur-Mer oil terminal agents are in strike since two weeks. They have been joined since October the 7th by Dockers and Dockers' port agents.

On October the 1st, anaesthetist nursing staff blocks the Champs Elysées.

General Assemblies [AG] were held with self-organization for starting point, for example inter-professional AGs at Gare de l'Est on some railway workers' and teachers' initiative, and some "AGs for an offensive strike". In these AGs people get organized who share the will to act outside of the union leadership and beyond categories separations (workers, unemployed, precarious, public sector vs. private sector).

And, the latest thing this month of October, "lycéens" strongly join hostilities. Eighty "lycées"⁹ blocked into two days, it's great...

Without initiatives that go beyond the institutional framework, without a strike overcoming the union leadership, there won't be any balance of forces, which could give birth to a real social movement. A movement where corporatist struggles are overcome, where bureaucrats get out of their depth, where the actions answer to wider preoccupations than the only question of retirements, where the struggle is not limited to defend alleged social benefits.

Let's not stop now after such a good start and let's organize our angers.

There is much more to take than what they want to leave us!

On October the 12th at 1 p.m.: meeting place for a procession at Notre Dame des Champs Church, on the corner of Montparnasse Street and Montparnasse Boulevard.

On October the 13th at 5 p.m.: Inter-professional AG at Bourse du Travail, metro station "Republic".

⁷ In French "operations escargots", literally "operations snail's pace".

⁸ Right-wing and presidential party.

⁹ High schools.