From Paris to Berlin, from Liège to Turin…

A new generation of workers is rejecting poverty and war

Since mid-September, a new generation of workers has been taking to the streets en masse. In Europe and elsewhere. Everywhere, the same anger. Everywhere, the same determination to fight against the sacrifices and the future of poverty that all governments want to impose on us. Everywhere, the same determination to feel stronger together

In Belgium, young people in Liège and Brussels took to the streets. In Turin, secondary school pupils occupied their schools, chanting: "*Do as they do in France*". In Rome and Naples, students demonstrated in solidarity. In Germany, tens of thousands of young people protested against the new compulsory military service. In Madrid, school pupils demonstrated in support of the teachers' strike. Students have mobilised in Greece, Chile, and now in Canada…

And this anger is not confined to young people. In Spain, over the summer, Airbus workers staged a three-month strike, deciding for themselves on the tactics of the struggle in their general assemblies. On 11 November, hundreds of thousands of workers, of all generations, poured into the streets of Madrid and Barcelona. In the spring, in India, workers sought to spread their struggle from factory to factory.

This is a historic moment: all these ongoing struggles reflect a profound shift in the mindset of the working class – our class. The placards read: "*Billions for schools and healthcare, not for bombs!*", "*Capitalism is broken, young people have no future*". At the general assemblies, people are talking about war and militarism, about the kind of society being prepared for us, and about revolution. In 1968, it took nearly a year for the struggle to spread to neighbouring Italy. Today, movements are erupting in several countries at once: precariousness is widespread everywhere, and the bleak future this society promises us is plain for all to see.

In France, young people have taken their struggle into their own hands

France is now the epicentre of this global protest movement. It all began at a secondary school in the Paris suburbs where there was a shortage of teachers. Within two weeks, more than a thousand secondary schools across the country were affected. Shamelessly beaten by the police, the secondary school pupils were joined by university students in solidarity against police repression. Very quickly, dozens of universities joined the struggle.

The strength of the movement in France lies in its general assemblies. Open to all and sovereign, they debate, vote and issue mandates. As early as 10 October, the first national secondary school general assembly brought together 200 pupils from 71 schools and 32 towns. At universities in Paris, Toulouse, Lyon and Bordeaux, students have taken the struggle into their own hands.

And in these general assemblies, the need to extend the struggle beyond the education sector alone was expressed. In universities, a motion calling for the struggle to be extended to workers circulated from one general assembly to the next. Students handed out leaflets and sent delegations to railway stations, hospitals and sorting centres… At Gare du Nord, students called on workers to hold assemblies at their workplaces and to join forces with those organised by young people. The common slogan was clear: let us all fight together – young and old, students, workers, the unemployed and pensioners – against precariousness.



On 5 November, 1.6 million people took to the streets, spanning all generations. This is an impressive figure.

But sheer numbers are not enough. Despite the willingness of many students to seek solidarity, most workers have not taken the struggle into their own hands. In the processions, young people were discussing, coordinating and trying to persuade others; employees were marching from one point to another whilst waiting for the rare days of trade union mobilisation. Workers, for the time being, have not had the strength to join the movement en masse and actively: there have been neither widespread strikes nor assemblies in the workplace to debate and organise. And on their own, school pupils and students will not be able to keep this up indefinitely.

Assemblies, strikes, escalation: the weapons of the working class

So, how do we take this step? This is the question facing workers in every country. Through their general assemblies, students in France have begun to ask this question. But history has already provided the answer.

In May '68, the student revolt became a historic event because the workers, in turn, joined the struggle: nearly 9 million strikers. In August 1980, in Poland, the strike that began at the Gdansk shipyards spread across the whole country within a few weeks. The strikers had formed joint strike committees across several companies, with elected and recallable

delegates. In 2006, in France, the government withdrew its 'First Job Contract' – which left young people in precarious employment – as soon as the student general assemblies, open to workers, posed a real threat of dragging companies into the struggle.

These experiences point the way forward. The key to a movement lies in extending the struggle as rapidly and resolutely as possible to all sectors! To fight, we therefore need:

- assemblies open to all – workers, the unemployed, pensioners, from both the public and private sectors – which make their own decisions and elect delegates who can be recalled;
- demands common to all the exploited: against job insecurity, poverty wages, job cuts and war budgets;
- mass delegations to workplaces to convince other workers to join the struggle.

The bourgeoisie's traps

The ruling class has learnt its lessons from 1968, 1980 and 2006: it knows that the danger lies in the assemblies and their spread. It has used its entire arsenal to stifle them.

First and foremost, fierce and unbridled repression! Everywhere! In France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Canada… In France, a 15-year-old had his hand torn off by a grenade; a 16-year-old schoolboy lost an eye. Thousands of young people, the majority of whom were minors, were taken into police custody, tear-gassed and beaten with batons. At the same time, images of burning rubbish bins and looting were shown on a continuous loop on television screens. General assemblies, leaflets, delegations to workers: not a word. The aim? To make the movement appear to be a riot in the eyes of workers worldwide, a sort of 'French peculiarity'. And to hide what gave it its strength: self-organisation, solidarity, the drive to expand the movement.

The trade unions, for their part, spoke of a 'general strike' on television programmes. On the ground, however, they called neither for a strike nor for assemblies. Weeks after the movement had begun, they scheduled days of action where everyone marched behind the banner of their sector and their union, without discussion, without taking any control of the struggle. In Spain, after preventing the spread of the Airbus workers' struggle, the trade unions isolated the education sector's struggle by holding it on its own day, before calling for a one-day general strike. All of this is the opposite of unity.

And everywhere, the bourgeoisie tells us that elections are the solution to our problems. In France, as the presidential election approaches, the left is posing as the protector of young people. In Spain, the government has called a snap election to channel the anger over housing. The message is always the same: put your faith in the ballot box!

The final trap: isolating young people. The media speak of '*generational rage*', as if older generations had stolen young people's future. But it was parents who demonstrated alongside their children, and teachers who formed a human chain to protect their pupils from the police! All working-class people, whether today or tomorrow, are affected by these attacks, by the cost of living, and by precarious conditions.

Do the '*Youth Days*', such as the one on 20 November, also risk confining the struggle to a single category – 'young people' – and isolating the younger generation from the rest of their class? Rejecting war is right. But it is through the united struggle of the entire global working class that we can stand up to it. Let us take part in these days to turn them into an opportunity to broaden the movement, to call on workers to join us and to decide together in general assemblies.

Uniting to prepare for the struggles ahead

The future in this society means ever more wars, misery and destruction of the planet… But from today onwards, it will also mean ever more struggles against the deterioration of living and working conditions. We do not yet know where and when the next workers' struggles will erupt, but what is certain is that the coming years will be marked by far more massive and profound movements.

Something is stirring within the very heart of the working class, whether through the sheer scale and reach of the struggles around the world, the way they are being driven by general assemblies in France, or the depth of thought evident on placards and expressed in discussions. The general assemblies show, in embryonic form, that another society is possible. They have rejected the logic of competition and profit. For the most part, they have championed solidarity between sectors, between generations, and with the unemployed, undocumented migrants and the homeless. Linked together on a global scale, such assemblies could, one day, become the forums where the working class debates and decides its future.

So, to ensure this movement is not forgotten, to learn all the lessons it has to offer, to understand our strengths and weaknesses, and to stay in touch, let us come together now in discussion groups to reflect, debate and organise ourselves for the struggles ahead.

The future belongs to the class struggle!

International Communist Current,
14 November 2026

Discuss together!

We invite anyone who wishes to do so to reflect on and discuss the ideas in this leaflet and to circulate it. We also invite you to visit our website (en.internationalism.org) and to write to us: email: **international@internationalism.org**. By post: BM Box 869, London WC1 3NN, UK

We also hold public meetings in several countries and in several languages, both online and in person.

The next one in English – focusing on the current social movements - is on Sunday 29 November at 2pm London time. To take part please email us.

Visit our website
en.internationalism.org



Follow us on Instagram
@internationalcommunist
current