"Paris Section, [*On the Importance of Having a Central Organization of the Working Class*]." *Workers Unite!: The International 150 Years Later*. Ed. Marcello Musto. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. 291–292. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781501302367.0096>>.

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*Paris Section, [On the Importance
of Having a Central Organization
of the Working Class]¹⁰⁷*

Citizens, we do not intend to run after new adventures. Moreover, our ranks have been thinned, our best soldiers exiled or shot. We must not forget it. That is why we come to declare formally and absolutely that we have no interest in any material and violent demonstration until the cadres of the International in Paris have been reformed, until the working class forces have grouped, until each and every member of the International in Paris has become penetrated with social principles.

We reject and repulse at any price all compromise whatever with a purely political party. We do not want to be transformed into a secret society, neither do we want to sink in the bog of purely economic evolution. Because a secret society leads to adventures in which the people is always the victim, because purely economic evolution would lead to the creation of a new class, and this contradicts the spirit of the International.

We consider, claim and declare that we are and will remain the International.
[...]

Let us say then that we are thinking of autonomy and concentration. Citizens, The Central Committee and the Commune gave the Paris proletariat a painful but fruitful experience.

Indeed it has experienced all that is disastrous in individual flounder between the centralizing tradition which is, so to speak, in the very marrow

¹⁰⁷ This text is an excerpt from the *Declaration of the Paris Sections to the Delegates of the International Association Assembled in Congress*. It was sent by the Ferré section, one of the first branches of the IWMA established after the defeat of the Paris Commune, and was read in one of the sessions of on 7 September at The Hague Congress (1872). Published 8 days later, in the newspaper *La Liberté*, the full text is in HAGUE: 233–6.

of the modern individual's bones and the concept of autonomy which is in his mind in the state of abstraction, of pure theory.

However, citizens, autonomy is the saving principle for modern society. But on the express and absolute condition that its exercise is regulated by consciousness of rights and duties. Otherwise, how could that exercise lead to anything but confusion and ruin when the individuals enjoying it are not conscious of rights and duties when they have to fight enemies disciplined by authority?

We must, we must at all costs, citizens, abandon the regions of pure theory, we must forget ourselves and think that the masses are ignorant, obstinate and inert owing to their mass of prejudices. And it is their education, their transformation, their emancipation, in the final account, that the international association has the mission to accomplish.

Federation derives from autonomy: and autonomy can offer no social and political guarantee unless it is based on the nation of rights and duties. [...]

To succeed in this task requires a central organization which disciplines working class action and distributes it everywhere. The General Council must therefore be an agency for spreading the general principles and the general wills of the proletariat.

We do not want the Council to be a head, a guidance. A thousand time no! That would result necessarily and fatally, in dictatorship. [...]

We want revolution everywhere, and if possible at the same time – because the need is for a general political revolution, the serious guarantee and the only guarantee of a general social revolution.

We have therefore decided not to accomplish a single material political action until our forces have become disciplined, conscious of the aim. The work is difficult and delicate, but it can be accomplished more quickly than is thought – with the method of perseverance, patient and rigorous selection of the combatants.