

# The meaning of revolutionary defeatism

The position of revolutionaries confronted with capitalist war is always the same: to oppose social revolution to war, to struggle against «their own» bourgeoisie and «their own» national state. Historically, this position is called revolutionary defeatism because it openly proclaims that the proletariat must struggle against the enemy which is in its «own» country, that it must act so as to bring about its defeat and that it is only in this way that it participates in the revolutionary unification of the world proletariat, it is only in this way that proletarian revolution can develop across the world.

From the origins of the workers' movement, the question of war and revolution, the question of the opposition between war and revolution, is central. Effectively, it is in a period of war and revolution (and history shows us the interaction between the two poles) that we can see most clearly who is on one side of the barricades and who is on the other. Throughout

history the position on war and revolution has been the culminating point at which various forces and parties calling themselves revolutionary (or socialist, or anarchist, or communist...) have been unmasked and have finally been forced to reveal their counter-revolutionary face(1) in their affirmations that such and such a war was a just war, that a particular country was the victim of aggression, that they were opposed to war but only in certain circumstances, that they support the liberation of some nation against some other...

By contrast, no doubt is possible from a revolutionary point of view. There is no need to wait for war to be declared to understand its nature, no need for the geopolitical speculations which are fashionable amongst bourgeois intellectuals or in cultured journals like *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Declarations made by the two protagonists in the name of peace which define who is the «aggressor» and who is the «victim» don't matter much. Like all

1- The fact that in 1914 official European social democracy placed itself on the side of national war is nothing other than the confirmation of its counter-revolutionary nature which had already been denounced for a long time by revolutionary militants. German social democracy in particular had already supported the imperialist military action of «its own» state elsewhere. But the fact that in 1914 the imperialist and bourgeois characters of the socialist parties was definitively unmasked contributed to the myth (maintained by innumerable groups and centrist parties) of a social democracy which suddenly lost its character as an organisation of the proletariat.

The revolutionary position against war comes from the material interests of the proletariat, from the fact that its general antagonism to capital is not an opposition to such and such a bourgeois fraction according to the government policy of the moment, but an opposition to the whole of the bourgeoisie.

the programmatic positions of communism, the position of revolutionaries confronting war between bourgeois states (or nationalist fractions which claim autonomy or independence) is simple and decisive:

- there is no such thing as a just war
- there is no such thing as a defensive war
- all wars of national liberation are inter-imperialist (and therefore imperialist)
- there is no camp which is for peace while another is for war
- there is no camp which represents barbarism while the other represents civilisation
- there is no camp which is more aggressive than the other
- there is no democratic camp against a dictatorial or fascist camp...or the other way round.

The opposites of all these formulae are used indiscriminately by the two capitalist camps with the aim of recruiting for their war(2).

The classic position of revolutionaries is to oppose any war between nation states with all their might. It is not based on an idea that we have about how we would like the world to be, an «idea» which constitutes the common denominator of the pacifists who, in the name of eternal peace, inevitably end up in one or other camp of capitalist war, ratifying their vocation as defenders of the «peace of the grave». On the contrary, this position comes from the material interests of the proletariat, from the fact that its general antagonism to capital is not an opposition to such and such a bourgeois fraction according to the government policy of the moment, but an opposition to the whole of the bourgeoisie, whatever its policies. Our practical antagonism to all war between states is the inevitable consequence of the fact that our interests are not opposed to the bourgeoisie because they

are «fascists» or «democrats», on the right or on the left, national imperialists or imperialist nationals, but purely and simply because they are bourgeois. Our opposition is the consequence of an incontestable truth: between exploiter and exploited there cannot be any unity which doesn't benefit the former. Any front or critical support for one camp against another benefits the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

Each class acts in accord with its interests and its fundamental programme. Capital is nothing more than capitals confronting each other. Capital itself contains the war between capitals, and it is precisely because of that that all the bourgeois fractions, whatever they might say, participate in one way or another in commercial and military wars which derive from the very nature of value in struggle against other values so as to valorise itself.

In the same way, the proletariat can only act as a class in refusing to serve as cannon fodder in national wars. It is not a question of one choice amongst others but of its existence as a class: it has no particular or regional interest to defend which opposes it to other proletarians - on the contrary, each faction of the proletariat, however limited its class action against capital might be, contains universality, expresses the interests of humanity by opposing every war.

You can reply to us that in numerous national wars proletarians have participated in and supported one or other camp. It's true, but they are not acting in accord with their own interests, they are acting precisely on the basis of the ideological domination of the dominant class. They are not acting as a worldwide class but as cannon fodder for the bourgeoisie. They are not acting as a revolutionary class but are negating themselves as a class and adhering to the people, to the nation, which is the very negation of the proletariat («the

2- Here we are only setting out our positions, without argument or explanation. Those who would like to know our explanation of the fact that every war of national liberation is an imperialist war, or that peace is a part of war, those who want to know why we refuse any support to a democratic camp against a dictatorial or fascist camp, we would direct to preceding issues of our central review. To understand the relevant material and how it is set out in various issues, we advise you to consult our Summaries in French and Spanish, that we will send out on demand.

proletariat has no country»). Bourgeois war, with massive and popular participation (as for example in the so-called Second World War) is the direct liquidation of the proletariat, of the very subject of revolution, to the benefit of capital. Therefore, beyond the subjective interests pursued by each capitalist, each bourgeois fraction in the commercial and then military war, capital in its entirety has an objective interest in the war: the destruction of the very subject of revolution, the disappearance, sometimes for a long historical period, of communism as a force.

Faced with this, the development of the proletariat as a class starts from life itself. In effect, our struggle begins with our very existence as a class, by our confrontation, from our birth, with private property, capital and the state. The positions that we have as organised proletarians do not start out from consideration of what the existing camps say but from our permanent confrontation with exploitation, with the inhuman conditions of life that the system imposes on us and which reach their highest level of inhumanity during wars.

Because war is the very essence of this society, because capital cannot live without periodic wars and its cycle of life is based on successive destruction of productive forces, the only real, radical and profound opposition to war is revolutionary opposition. Only social revolution will definitively put an end to war, for all time.

That is why the cry of revolutionaries in the face of war has always been: «turn the imperialist war into a social war for universal revolution».

In isolation, this slogan has nevertheless been revealed as historically insufficient because real opposition to war and to international capital means in practice an open opposition to the bourgeoisie and the state which, in every camp, recruits for the war. That

opposition expresses itself very practically because the bourgeoisie knows how to use the whole terrorist arsenal of its state to impose recruitment and adherence to the war: «state of war» police measures, generalised censorship, general mobilisation, nationalist fanaticism (racism, xenophobia, religious sectarianism), the repression of revolutionaries accused of supporting the opposing camp (accusations of espionage) or «high treason», etc.(3)

In such circumstances, to declare oneself against the war and the bourgeoisie in general, without taking a concrete action against the increase of exploitation that all war generates is only a simple propaganda formula and not a revolutionary direction for action. In effect, bourgeois war concretises itself above all else as the war of a state against «its» proletariat, that is to say against the proletariat of that country, to grind it down, to liquidate the revolutionary minorities and to drag it progressively into the bourgeois war. This shows that it is indispensable, inescapable, indisputable to assert the fact that «the enemy is in our own country», that it is «our own bourgeoisie», «our own state». It is in the struggle to bring about the defeat of «its own» bourgeoisie, of «its own» state that the proletariat really assumes internationalist solidarity with the world revolution. Or, to speak from a more global point of view, the world revolution is constituted precisely in the generalisation of the revolutionary defeatism of the world proletariat.

More than this, the proletariat «of» such or such a country(4) cannot deal a class blow to «its» bourgeoisie and «its» state, nor extend the hand of solidarity to its class brothers and sisters in the «other camp» who are also at war with «their» bourgeoisie and «their» state, without committing an «act of high treason», without contributing to the defeat of «its own army», without act-

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3- In this «etc.» we can also include the bombing of entire regions where deserters gather (see our various articles on the class struggle in Iraq), or the destruction of towns and villages which don't support the war.

4- It is always more correct programmatically to speak of the (world) proletariat «in» such or such a country but, within the limits of the dominant language, this often makes the formulation too cumbersome: independently of the formulation that we are forced to employ, it should therefore be clear that we are always referring to the world proletariat «in» such and such a region or country.

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ing overtly to degrade the army of «its own country». What's more, revolutionary defeatism concretises itself not only by fraternity between fronts with the soldiers (proletarians in uniform) of the «other camp» (the only aspect accepted by centrism) but also by the concrete action of destruction of «its own» army.

Historically, revolutionaries have also distinguished themselves from centrists by their appeal for the independent organisation of soldiers against officers, for the leadership which they give to the concrete action of sabotaging the army, by the call to shoot «your own officers» (and by their energetic struggle to put this into practice), by the fact of turning rifles away from the «external enemy» and pointing them at the «officers» of the fatherland.

In fact the experience of war and revolution, and in particular the concrete experience of what is called the «First» world war has allowed us to clarify the point that the call for revolutionary struggle against bourgeois war is completely insufficient and centrist in practice if it is not accompanied by its practical concretisation, that is to say open struggle against «its own» bourgeoisie, for the defeat of «its own» state. In all cases, «the war against the foreigner» means above all else «war against the proletariat» of that country. In fact if you practically oppose a general mobilisation led by one bourgeois or one concrete national state, to say that you are struggling «against all the bourgeoisie whoever they are», or to appeal to «revolutionary struggle against the war» without acting concretely for the defeat of «your own» country is equivalent to falling into propagandism<sup>(5)</sup> and playing the game of chauvinism.

During the so-called First world war, the Centre of the Second International (in opposition to its Right which declared itself for «defence of

the nation») claimed to oppose revolution to war and launched slogans as radical as «war on war». But, at the same time, it opposed revolutionary defeatist calls because, so they said, (like all the army generals!) that would benefit the national enemy, and so they ended up proposing slogans like «neither victory nor defeat».

We mustn't forget that no fraction of the bourgeoisie has ever declared itself in favour of war, they all claim to be fighting for peace, and the generals themselves know that peace is nothing other than a fundamental weapon of war. When the social democrats, like E. David, vote for war credits<sup>(6)</sup>, it is not in the name of war, but in the name of peace and to «prevent defeat». Here is how E. David justified his vote: «the purpose of our vote of 4 August is the following: not for war but against defeat». It is clear that in the face of a war which concretised itself as a war between the proletariat and «its own» state, the classic position of bourgeois socialism, as well as the position which pronounces «neither victory nor defeat», would disorganise the proletariat and help lead it to butchery.

On this question, Lenin rallied the «International communist left» who opposed themselves to the centrist position dominant in the international conferences (of Kiental and Zimmerwald). Beyond the fetishism of the individual, and despite all the critiques that we have made of Lenin, we don't hesitate in quoting him in the years when he effectively concurred with the critique made by revolutionaries and when, in practice, he took a position against social democratic centrism:

«The 'revolutionary struggle against war' is only one of the empty exclamations without content on which the heroes of the Second International are experts if through them we don't understand revolutionary actions against the government itself in times of war.

5- In the end it is an idealist position identical to that put forward by those who maintain that you shouldn't struggle for immediate demands because that would be reformist, but you should struggle for revolution. As if the reformist can satisfy the immediate interests of proletarians! As if the struggle for social revolution can emerge by other means than by the generalisation of all the immediate demands! As if the revolution itself is something other than a need, an always more immediate necessity for the proletariat in its entirety!

6- The famous vote for war credits by the social democrats (despite all the fuss that is made about it) is nothing other than the symbolic part of their global practice aiming at crushing the proletariat and leading it to slaughter. The mystification consists in believing that this vote was decisive in the unleashing of the war when in fact it was nothing other than the parliamentary formalisation of a much more general action which had been going on for a long time. This was the domestication of proletarians to the extent that they accepted to kill and be killed for the interests of the bourgeoisie. That said, because the social democrats themselves have always mystified that vote, it is interesting to quote them as they claim to justify it.

It is sufficient to meditate for one moment to understand it thus. But, in times of war, revolutionary actions against the government itself mean undoubtedly and indissolubly not only that one wants the defeat of the government but also that one contributes in a active fashion to that defeat...

In times of war, the revolution is a civil war, and, in part, the transformation of a war between governments into civil war is facilitated by the military reversals (by «defeat») of governments, and, also, it is impossible to contribute practically to that transformation if one does not contribute at the same time to defeat... If the chauvinists (such as the Committee of Organisation and the Chjeidze fraction) reject the «call» for defeat it is only because it is the only call which appeals in a consequent fashion for revolutionary actions against its own government during the war. Because, if there is no revolutionary action, the thousands of ultra-revolutionary phrases on the struggle «against the war and the conditions etc...» are worth nothing. The adversaries of the call for defeat are purely and simply afraid of themselves because they do not dare to look in the face the fact that there exists an indissociable relation between revolutionary agitation and the necessary contribution to defeat... Someone who defends the call for «neither victory nor defeat» is a chauvinist consciously or unconsciously. In the best case, they are a petty bourgeois conciliator but, in every way, they are an enemy of proletarian politics, a partisan of existing governments and of the existing dominant classes...»(7)

We can note here that revolutionary defeatism (opposing the social revolution to war), that concretisation of the position revolutionaries always hold, doesn't come in any way from an ideological speculation on the policy of this or that bourgeois fraction but from the very essence of the proletar-

iat, from its vital needs. In effect, the struggle of the proletariat, the totality of the programmatic content of the communist revolution emerges from the struggle against exploitation. It is the most natural thing that when the proletariat is confronted with war it not only does not abandon the permanent struggle against exploitation (the struggle against «its own» bosses, against «its own» bourgeoisie, against «its own» unions, against «its own» government) but that it intensifies it because war always implies that the conditions of exploitation and, in general, all the conditions of life (and struggle) brutally worsen. It will be the same bourgeois, the same trade unionists, the same politicians and governments who, without exception, try to make the proletariat forget these conditions of life and demand more sacrifices, more work for less pay, and plenty of other things which, according to country and circumstances, will range from voluntary collections for the front to ministerial decrees imposing days of forced labour to support the war effort and the levying of a percentage of wages to be contributed to the war effort of the «nation» (Saddam Hussein managed to sometimes impose a month of unpaid work to finance his war!). In these circumstances, while nationalism attacks the proletariat, centrism tries to weaken the immediate revolutionary struggle(8) against the sectors of the bourgeoisie which directly impose war sacrifices. To do this it doesn't hesitate in launching vague slogans concerning the opposition of the revolution to war in general, arguing that we mustn't play into the hands of the «enemy country», that the struggle against capitalism in general does not require absolute revolutionary defeatism because all the fractions of capital are equal(9). It is precisely in those moments where any immediate struggle against exploitation reveals its character of sabotage of the national effort and

7- Lenin in «On the defeat of one's own government in the imperialist war», *Sotsial-Demokrat*, number 43 (26 July 1915).

8- Our group has always condemned the social democratic separation between economic struggle and political struggle, between the immediate struggle and the historic struggle. This is a separation which always ends up by establishing intermediate or bridging programmes. This obviously has a general validity but it is precisely in times of war, because of the efforts and general mobilisation involved, that our statement becomes socially evident and directly relevant. In effect, in these moments, every economic struggle of the proletariat attacks the national war effort, every immediate struggle against exploitation takes on a character of war against the state. The struggle of the proletariat is then immediately a revolutionary struggle.

9- It is obvious that all the fractions of capital are equally enemies of the proletariat. But the problem in this context is that this argument serves to paralyse the only struggle possible: the concrete struggle against the bourgeoisie and the state which exploits, dominates and imposes the national war effort. What's more, it is, for the proletariat, the only way to develop its own power and to struggle at the same time against the bourgeoisie of the opposing camp and against capital in general, which concretise itself, as we will see later on, in

## The invariance of the revolutionary position on war

the revolutionary defeat of «its army» and the generalisation of insurrection.

10- Creating fear by brandishing the spectre of fascism is a constant of the counter-revolution which has cost humanity hundreds of millions of dead since the 1920s (it's enough to think of the 60 million dead in the so-called Second World War). We should also recall that in Spain it was in this way that in 1936/7 the (Republican) state managed to disarm and liquidate the proletariat that was the last rampart against war. But war was indispensable to world capital and it finally succeeded in waging it.

where revolutionary struggle becomes indispensable to obtain daily bread that the positions proper to centrism (positions which resemble a classic position of bourgeois neutrality supplemented by a collection of resounding declarations against war and for revolution) can take their place as the ultimate bulwark against revolution.

In every war the rate of exploitation of the proletariat increases in a direct way and its conditions of existence are degraded by the fact of destruction, from the lack of provisions and because, moreover, of what every war implies, the unleashing of state terrorism with the aim of persuading proletarians to kill and be killed at the front.

That is why struggling against «one's own» bourgeoisie, fighting for the defeat of «one's own» national (imperialist) camp are not positions invented or introduced into the movement by revolutionaries. They are the result of the very development of the struggle against exploitation which through war undergoes a qualitative leap. The separation between economics and politics by which they try to bamboozle proletarians and which seems to have a certain reality in times of peace is practically liquidated during war. The illusion of defending the economic conditions of the proletariat without being involved in politics crumbles. Every action of the proletariat to defend its vital interests opposes it to the policies of «its own» state. In times of war the «economic» struggle of the proletariat is directly a defeatist struggle. It is directly a revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary defeatism is a question of life or death for the proletariat. Any action based on proletarian interests leads to the defeat of «its own» state and, as Lenin said to the centrists, any really revolutionary agita-

tion is a contribution to the defeat of «one's own camp».

That is why, when they tell us to abandon the struggle against exploitation, or that now is not the moment or that the main enemy is elsewhere («dictatorship» or «fascism»,...) (10), every time they are in fact acting to purely and simply liquidate the struggle of the proletariat. Even worse, if in periods of war the proletariat cannot defend its most elementary conditions of life without struggling against «its own» bourgeoisie, without acting overtly for the defeat of «its own» government, it renounces not only its most elementary material interests but its existence as a class.

This is to say that if the position of revolutionaries in the face of war finds itself in complete harmony with their general positions this is because these positions come out of the interests of the proletariat themselves, from their immediate and historic interests which are inseparable. In no way and under no circumstances does the proletariat have an interest in sacrificing itself, whether in the name of the war against an external enemy or under the false pretext that the enemies are all equal, the slogan «neither victory nor defeat». Each time it is asked to put to one side its conditions of life, each time it is asked to sacrifice itself in the name of the struggle against fascism, imperialism, the external enemy... this is a betrayal of its interests.

To finish off, let's respond to an objection which has always arisen in the face of the defeatist position of revolutionaries. It is obvious that the counter-revolution will assimilate national defeat into the national victory of the opposing camp. Elsewhere the centrists launch slogans such as «neither victory nor defeat» on the basis of this argument. It is clear, however, that this position is situated exclusively in the national (and not class)



framework and that it is a question of a conception which sees in war only national victories or defeats and not the revolutionary liquidation of the army, proletarian insurrection etc. However much this position claims to be on the left or extreme left it does not hold back in the least from the militarist and imperialist argument par excellence, the argument of the generals who run the war. For them it is logical that the revolutionary proletariat should be a «traitor to the nation» and «favour the country's enemy». In reality, the more the defeat of the national army accelerates, the more uprisings of troops and insurrectional mutinies break out, the more fraternisation spreads on the front, the more the opposing national army will also be weakened and we can verify historically how the officers of «our own» army join forces with those of the other camp to struggle against the proletarian movement. These agreements between enemy officers are completely normal in view of the fact that the insurrectional decomposition of the state always goes beyond a strictly national framework. This is because while the proletariat is really in the process of attacking «its own» bourgeoisie, «its own» army, «its own» state, it is the whole of the bourgeoisie which it is attacking, all the bourgeois armies, the whole of the world state - in brief, world capital in its totality. Faced with the process of generalised defeatism, we can see that throughout the history of capitalism the world bourgeoisie tries to unify itself, to obtain agreements against desertion in both camps, to attack the bastions of insurrection in their entirety. It is then inevitable that class confrontation is given the highest priority.

To recap what we have argued above, revolutionary defeatism is the best way of transforming imperialist war into revolutionary civil war, war between nations or capitalist fractions

into social revolution.

Furthermore, the more the defeat and disorganisation of «our own» state becomes a reality, the less the state is capable of repressing revolutionary action and the easier it is to communicate and to centralise the revolutionary action developed by the proletariat in the other camp. The struggle «against our own bourgeoisie» and against «our own» state thus takes on a supreme level when, on both sides of the front, agitation and direct action leads to the disorganisation and revolutionary defeat of all the armies, strengthening the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

Of course, revolutionary defeatism is often much stronger in one camp than the other. In general this results from the fact that the politico-military weakening of the army is more important in one camp than in the other and/or from the fact of revolutionary action itself, from the organisation of the soldiers, from the most determined character of the avant-garde sectors of the proletariat. From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, all this will be used to confirm that proletarians favour the opposed national camp. But the strength of revolutionary defeatism in one camp allows the development and reinforcement of revolutionary defeatism in the opposed camp in a still more determined fashion. The means which have got results in «our» camp will also be applied there. So, action coordinated with the internationalists who find themselves in the other camp allows a far more effective defeatist propaganda, appeals to desertion «in the other camp» will have much more force and will be better understood by the soldiers themselves.

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eralisation of revolutionary defeatism, which in turn requires agitation and direct action in all camps. This agitation and this direct action must be put to good use by the avant-garde sectors of the proletariat who coordinate action across the front lines that the international bourgeoisie try to impose. It will be precisely in the camp where revolutionary defeatism is the most general and the most profound that avant-garde minorities will be most able to develop revolutionary defeatism in the «opposing camp». Consequently, there, where revolutionary defeatism is most weak, where repression is exercised without restraint, the most important international support will come from comrades who, in the «other camp», are succeeding in imposing revolutionary defeatism. As we have said already, the most precious aid from comrades in the «other camp» comes from the revolutionary defeat of «their» army. The more that army falls apart, the more comrades will increase their capacity to appeal for fraternisation on all fronts, for desertion, for the organisation of the struggle for the generalisation of defeatism in all the bourgeois armies.

In its essence, revolutionary defeatism is general and never national. It may well express itself at different levels in different countries or bourgeois camps, but while it concretises itself in one country or one camp it inevitably tends to generalise to the others. This historic determination is taken in hand and led by the avant-garde of the proletariat who try to concentrate their defeatist efforts (propaganda, action, sabotage...) precisely in the places and «camps» of the imperialist war where defeatism has the least force to show the proletariat of «that camp» that with revolutionary defeatism it has nothing to lose and a world to win.

In all the great revolutionary experiences we can see the inevitable phenomenon of the generalisation of rev-

olutionary defeatism(11). Contrary to all the defencist or neutralist arguments of the centrists, far from being more controllable or invadable, a country in which revolutionary defeatism imposes itself carries an enormous risk for the bourgeoisie of the opposing camp if they want to continue the inter-bourgeois war. From the Paris Commune to the proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917, we can see that when facing an insurrectional movement of the proletariat «the opposed national army» finds itself paralysed in the face of an important tendency to fraternisation and thus to movements of troops against «their own» bourgeoisie. When in 1918/19 the German bourgeoisie decided to ignore this principle and continue the imperialist war against insurgent Russia, they quickly became aware that revolutionary defeatism was taking on a previously unsuspected force in Germany thanks to the «contagion» and the revolutionary defeatist action of communists in both camps. The result was that proletarian insurrection spread in Germany as well. The old allies of Russia also immediately declared war on revolutionary Russia under the pretext that «they don't respect the previous diplomatic and military agreements» and a dozen armies then attempted to liquidate the insurrectional movement in Russia. But here as well revolutionary defeatism generalised itself to all the armies. The organisation of workers and soldiers, the fraternisations, execution of officers, occupation of ships by rebellious sailors and of barracks by troops in the French armed forces, as well as those of Belgium and Britain. Revolutionary defeatism was general in all the countries which participated in the war, in the manner of the wave of world-wide proletarian insurrection in 1919. The cleverest bourgeois then understood that it is not possible to fight insurrection and revolutionary defeatism by sending more soldiers

11- And vice versa. When revolutionary defeatism does not impose itself at all and the proletariat submits to the nation, to the popular front, to fascism and to anti-fascism, as was the case during the «Second World War», imperialist nationalism develops on all fronts and camps and the generalisation of massacre is total. In that particular case the war destroyed everything that capital needed to destroy to be able to begin a new cycle of expansion based on mounds of corpses of «workers» who died clutching their national flags.



and more armies because they will decompose ever more rapidly and violently when faced with an insurgent proletariat. Winston Churchill expressed that truth when he said that trying to crush an insurrection with an army is like trying to stop a flood with a broom.

Revolutionary defeatism can never be conceived of as a question of countries or of nations, but as a general opposition of the proletariat to capital. So far we have spoken, without a further clarification, of «our own» bourgeoisie, «our own» state and so on. But, as all our readers know, our group has never ceased to insist, since it started, that the state is worldwide, that capital is worldwide. From the revolutionary defeatist point of view, while we act against «our own» bourgeoisie» and «our own» state, this has nothing to do with the nationality of the bourgeois or the government which we face, as our enemies try to make people believe as they deform the invariant content of our positions. We can never repeat enough that the proletariat must struggle against all bourgeois, against all governments. It is a matter of insisting on struggle against the immediate bosses and immediate forces of repression, but as part of the world-wide struggle of the proletariat against the world bourgeoisie. The struggle of the proletariat cannot rest on any intermediary, and that is precisely why the struggle against capital is always a struggle against direct exploitation and state repression. The struggle against direct repression and exploitation attacks the very bases of worldwide capital accumulation and the world state. To put it another way, the central characteristic of the struggle of the proletariat is the organic centrality of its direct action against capital, by which (contrary to the struggle of capital) even if that struggle takes place in a single neighbourhood, a single industrial district, a single town, it contains

the totality and represents, independently of the consciousness of its protagonists, the organic general interests of the proletariat worldwide.

For the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the central determinations of struggle are exactly opposed. However much it may pretend to have a general validity, the struggle of a bourgeois fraction always contains an egoistic and particular interest because any movement of valorisation attacks other processes of valorisation which must necessarily have interests opposed to it(12). That is why the notion of unity defended by a fraction of the bourgeoisie is fundamentally a democratic unity, an unstable alliance, the result of the unification of opposed interests which ceaselessly fractures. Whatever is the level of bourgeois unification it is always a question of a temporary union against other, rival, fractions. By contrast, the proletariat, even when it struggles around something particular, affirms its organic being as a totality facing capital in its entirety.

That is why, when we speak of «our own» state and «our own» bourgeoisie, we don't mean the bourgeoisie and the state of this nation(13), but simply the bourgeoisie which exploits us directly, those who repress us every day, the priests and/or trade unions that we have to confront every day and which try to lead us to the abattoir of war. In a word, we mean the tentacle of the world state which grips us and that we must slice through to improve the general balance of forces in relation to the international capitalist monster.

If at some given moment, so as to re-establish capitalist order, other bosses are put in place of the ones which we confront every day, or if the national government solicits external help to repress us, revolutionary defeatism continues to be applied against the new bosses and the new immediate repressive forces, independent of their

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12- The state of the Yankee imperialists is not the first in the history of bourgeois social formation to claim to incarnate the general interests of world capital! From the origins of capitalism, various powers and bourgeois alliances (whether it's the Vatican, the India Companies or the maritime power of the British Empire) have tried to create a single solid order. But this unity always cracks, bringing to nothing all the theories of Global Monopoly and Ultra-Imperialism ardently defended, yesterday just as today, in the bourgeois camp in general and by the social democrats in particular.

13- What's more, as can be seen in some of our other texts, the nation does not coincide in any way with the structuration of the bourgeoisie into a state.

14- We mustn't forget that the local bour-

## The invariance of the revolutionary position on war

geoisie are equally imperialist.

15- We want to take the opportunity to make it clear that, contrary to all the myths about «national liberation», this type of capitalist war is not something characteristic of «colonised», «poor» or «under-developed» countries as the bourgeois «left» say. That type of war is proper to the whole world, including in old Europe where there were and still are and will be «national wars» as long as capital lasts. This type of war does not belong to capital's past or to one of its phases, but results from the development of capital itself and will continue to exist while that

nationality, for the same reasons and in the same way that we fought the old bosses and the old government. That position is fundamental in the context of the bourgeois and imperialist polemic about national liberation. Time and time again they try to turn the struggle against the local bourgeois towards the struggle against the «imperial»(14) bourgeois and time and time again they try to impose the struggle between national fractions against the struggle between classes. The most complicated situation arises when the local bourgeoisie, totally overwhelmed by «their own» proletariat and having bourgeois sectors taking up the discourse of «anti-imperialism» for an opposition, call for help from the «imperialist» fraction to repress the insurgent proletariat, or where the bourgeois fraction which calls itself «anti-imperialist» imposes itself militarily on the others. In these cases, they try to squeeze the proletariat between two imperialist forces, thus attempting to transform its social struggle into imperialist war. But even in that situation we are not faced with a new phenomenon. It is a matter of a classic imperialist war against the proletariat,

hidden, like every imperialist war, behind national flags(15). It's obvious that faced with this situation the position of revolutionaries doesn't change one bit, quite the contrary! Revolutionary defeatism shows all its relevance and continues to be applied both to the «national liberators» who claim to be anti-imperialist as well as to the military force of the «imperialist power» which tries to re-establish order.

In all situations, therefore, the revolutionary struggle for the transformation of the imperialist war into social war against «our own» bourgeoisie makes itself concrete by revolutionary defeatism, or to put it another way, by the struggle against the enemy which is «in our own country», against those who directly run, on behalf of world capital, «our» exploitation and «our» repression. The strength of the proletariat against capital depends precisely on its capacity to adapt itself to the struggle against the various bourgeois fractions, against the different forms of domination which capital tries to impose on us.

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## AGAINST CAPITALIST WAR AND PEACE

Against all reformist and pacifist illusions about war, we publish here two leaflets circulated during and after the war in Kosovo, the first one in Hungary, the second one in the United States of America (Portland, Oregon). They have been produced by comrades who are fighting with us for the centralisation of the proletarian community of struggle against capitalism, a community that is still not aware enough of its own existence and of its historic force.

Both leaflets are internationalist militant expressions reminding us that both war and peace are against the proletariat, that both are moments of the counterrevolutionary affirmation of capitalism against the interests of humanity.

There is no capitalism without war!  
To abolish war we have to abolish capitalism!



Against every bourgeois war, revolutionaries have given, still give and will always give the same response of revolutionary defeatism.

Today as yesterday:

The enemy is  
«in our own country»,  
it is «our own» bourgeoisie!

The arms which they want us  
to point at the foreigner  
must be turned  
against «our own» state!

Let's transform  
the inter-bourgeois war  
into revolutionary war!

Let's transform the war  
between states  
into a war  
to destroy all states!

## DOWN WITH CAPITALIST WAR! DOWN WITH CAPITALIST PEACE!

The war is already in our neighbour's. The Hungarian and the Yugoslavian government, the NATO and the UCK, Clinton and the Pope... they all try to convince us that this war - just like all other wars - is the consequence of some fatal mistakes, of some surprising abnormality, of a slight hitch in the smooth running of the democratic world system, and it is the brainchild of certain mad leaders. They all claim to be fighting for peace...

### **They talk to us of peace - and they drive us into war!**

But war is not a fatal mistake. Just on the contrary. It's the essence of capitalism, and one of the bases of its functioning is the permanent economic fight among the different fractions of capital. Capital is inherently imperialist. Conquering and obtaining more and more markets belong to its normal way of functioning. The multiplication of centres of war is a necessarily phenomenon. And it is always the proletarians who get the worse in the fight between the different fractions of capital. War is taking place in our everyday life too: when we are forced to work, when the maintenance of our mere life is getting more and more difficult... But sometimes capitalist «peace» is replaced by open war.

### **War is always against the interests of the proletariat!**

What does war mean on the level of everyday reality?

- death on the front line and in the trenches...
- death in the prison camps
- death in the refugee camps, by the side of roads, next to mass graves...
- death at home, under the ruins of houses...
- conscriptions, mobilization... in order to force us to massacre each other, to kill our proletarian brothers in the interest of capital...
- compulsion of work, militarization of work and the increasing of its intensity...
- hunger, misery, high prices, shortages...

This reality shows evidently that the war is against the proletariat, against our interests and against our struggle. This war is a new episode in the already endless list of attacks by the worldwide capitalist State against the proletariat. This nth war is nothing but a genuine product of the capitalist world of exploitation.

This war in Yugoslavia is another step towards the more generalised war through the «acceptance» (an «acceptance» that is being imposed by terror and permanent blackmail!) by all of war as the «natural» perspective for society in crisis. The majority of proletarians passively watch the progression of massacres on their television screens. Since the crisis is «natural», so unemployment, misery, all kinds of sacrifices also become «natural». You no longer protest, you start to accept to sacrifice yourself. **And with this same logic, you will soon find yourself on the train leaving for the front!**

This is not surprising since the majority of proletarians today, especially in Europe, remain prisoners of patriotism and other bourgeois ideological frameworks such as «pacifism», «anti-imperialism» or still «anti-fascism» (all of which defend democracy, the social order of capitalism). This is not surprising either when we can see that the international proletariat today is not capable of affirming its revolutionary nature with its own communist project.

As long as we remain passive consumers and spectators of our own miserable lives, as long as we remain «useful idiots», everything can happen to us. We shouldn't be surprised then if tomorrow these good citizens start to kill each other for any reason you care to name! Neighbour against neighbour, workmate against workmate, proletarian against proletarian.

The fact, that war is becoming «normal», and the constant threat terrorizes, threatens not only the proletariat of the states that are directly involved in the war, but also the proletariat of the whole world. And capitalism - while it is launching wars - is talking of peace and humanitarianism. But humanitarian campaigns, aid actions, etc are only means of blackmailing - and, in passing, make market for tons of unsaleable products - by which the control over the proletariat is being strengthened.

Today Yugoslavia is the most important centre of war in Europe. There are several reasons for launching the war there, but one of the most important is that since the middle of the '80s the proletarians in Yugoslavia opposed a fierce resistance to the austerity measures of the state. Compared with the beginning of the '90s, the war has become considerably larger in scale. The NATO has intervened, Hungary has become a war country; the international capital has attacked the proletarians of the region. One of the direct reasons for this is the proletarian insurrection in Albania, which started in 1997. The bourgeoisie hasn't managed to restore order in Albania since then. Today the bourgeoisie tries to minimise the treat of revolution: they drive the proletarians into an imperialist war, setting them nationalist aims. In the fight «Serbs» are incited against «Albanians» in order to hide that **the real fronts are not between nations, but between the two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat!**

The UCK (the Kosovo Liberation Army) is also part of the bourgeois state, just like all confronting fractions. It is proved by their nationalism, their army conscripted by force, which terrorises the population exactly the same way as the Serb police does, their concentration camps (they call them refugee camps), in which the terror guys of the UCK collect everyone still fit for military service and send them to the front line, to die.

**We, communists are against all sides**, against the Serbs and the Albanians, against the NATO and the whole «international community», against all states, against every bourgeois fraction. **We have no homeland! To be a patriot is to be a murderer!**

Hungary has become a front-line country.

We can expect:

- the escalation of the war - since the mobilisation of reservists, the preparation of the civil defence guard, etc. have already started
- stabilisation of war conditions
- increasing nationalist incites, spreading of irredentism (today Vojvodina, tomorrow Transylvania, Slovakia, Carpathian-Ukraine...)
- price rises, austerity measures because of the war
- increasing surveillance over the proletariat, intensification of the official (police, security guards) and unofficial (fascist gangs) state terror.

### **FIGHT AGAINST WAR = FIGHT AGAINST CAPITALISM!!!**

We're not powerless: we are rich in the historical experience of our class, we must reappropriate the collective memory of our struggles; this provides us with the classist framework for our own activities and saves us having to reproduce the same mistakes again and again. We also know that our struggle carries real perspectives, from life itself. Looking ahead, we want to destroy non-life, our misery, exploitation!

In this fight we can only count on our own strength, on the power of the proletariat. We, first of all, attack the bourgeois fraction which we are directly confronted with, we fight against «our own bourgeoisie». Internationalism doesn't mean to «do something for proletarians everywhere»; but it means to be the part of the same struggle, to assert here as everywhere the community of interests and of struggle that we share with our class brothers and sisters in Serbia, in Kosovo and everywhere in the world. Revolutionary defeatism = the struggle for the defeat of «one's own bourgeoisie» - against the whole bourgeois order!

Proletarian brother! Don't let the capital fool you! Organise against capitalism! Sabotage production! Desert the army! Turn your arm against the real enemy!

**Read, spread this leaflet, and discuss it with others!**

**Milosevic = UCK = NATO**

**DOWN WITH ALL STATES!**

**LONG LIVE COMMUNIST WORLDREVOLUTION!**

## **AGAINST WAR, AGAINST PEACE**

The small number of people today who appear to oppose America's present bloody military interventions must be applauded for their courage and persistence.

They stand against the masses' constant, unthinking approval of military force. And they are faced with a situation where they have no ideas to give them any expectations that they could effectively oppose these interventions.

The ideas put at the recent anti-war demos seem approximately divided between pacifism and reformulations of the classical Trotskyist or Maoist left. Each of these approaches has some insights into the conditions of the current slaughter (we are writing at the point of simultaneous bombing campaigns against Yugoslavia and Iraq). Passivists realize that the actions of each side serve mainly to polarize the entire situation. Leninist leftists realize that each side is motivated by market forces and the need to preserve capitalism. Each position has totally ridiculous qualities as well. Pacifist ideology implies that the government, the powerful or «we,» may somehow just wake-up to the «mistake» that were made and change the course of the war. Each Leninist group looks for a particular nation to push as «oppressed» and naturally ignores the obvious common interest each national gangster has with the other. The different flavors «socialist» absurdly talk about «imperialism» when capitalism conquered the entire world and NATO's intervention surely serves to strengthen the bloody nationalism of Yugoslavia/Serbia.

What each side misses is that this war is an inherent result of normal daily life. What is naively called peace - work, shopping and television - is the health of the state and the war machine. The housing development, the industrial park and the shopping mall create and are created by the military industrial complex. Not only does military production sustain the economy, but every dictatorial institution, from McDonalds to Microsoft to the Department of Defense, reinforces every other. The wars of today are quite correctly called «police actions.» America's army intervenes on world scale to keep the same bloody order that cops protect on a local level. The goal of NATO is not simply to dominate Kosova but to control the direction of its development - to assure that exploitation and peace prevail.

Just as in Somalia, the war in Kosova began to impose a «humanitarian solution» to the problem of a dispossessed that would not behave. And this humanitarian solution is the order of capitalism itself. «Humanitarian» organizations around the world have shown themselves to be in many ways as much pawns of world capitalism as NATO. While some NGOs are simply fronts for west intelligence agencies, their fundamental problem comes as they operate with the paradigm of putting the dispossessed in a position of dependence and training the dispossessed for order of development. In this way, the «NGOs» serve as social workers («soft cops») to NATO's hard cops. The humanitarian peace that NATO, NGOs and the United Nations seeks to impose is specifically to keep proletarians in a position of dependence. If the various nations or organizations disagree about methods, it is merely a question of fighting about who gets to carve up the pie. A full picture of this process can be seen in UN «humanitarian» refugee camps set-up after the uprising against Saddam Hussein in Northern Iraq («Kurdistan»). These camps demanded proletarian surrender their weapons in exchange for food - food which the UN had itself embargoed against Iraq. The camps were set up to defeat the rebellious proletarians who were fighting America's supposed enemy, Saddam Hussein. Indeed, US forces in the Gulf War had already killed 50,000 Iraqi deserters while working hard to keep Saddam Hussein in power. (It is quite possible that once the dust settles in Kosova we will find that similar rebellions happened and were suppressed by both sides. But naturally, the actual situation is difficult to determine). In any case, the present order of war and peace is directly against the proletariat, and our rebellions, our refusal to accept the dictatorship of money, of work and bureaucracy.

**DISPOSSESSED OF ALL NATIONS UNITE AND DESTROY YOUR ENEMIES.**

ASAN-PO Box 3305-Oakland, CA-94609-U.S.A

# W E U N D E R L I N E

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1929-1939

## 25 concentration camps in England.

Concentration camps have always existed. Every time that capital feels the need to get rid of some of the labour-force commodity, proletarians are gathered into camps and forced to work. First this is to keep them under control, to prevent them from organising themselves against unemployment and growing poverty. Secondly, as is the case in Italy today with the huge influx of «refugees», it is to avoid having thousands of proletarians roaming about as they might upset the balance of the fragile social peace still reigning in the country. Eventually, when war generalises and death itself becomes «normal», it is a matter of purely and simply liquidating those now useless, dangerous and expensive masses. That is what happened all across Europe only 60 years ago.

Today we are feeling the first symptoms. All over Europe so-called illegal immigrants, refugees, boat people, are locked up. Proposals have been put forward for forced labour for the unemployed. In Southern Italy there has been large scale imprisonment of proletarians and the same in France, albeit on a smaller scale. However, violence is always the same: in Pescara the Italian Navy sank a boat full of refugees from Albania, in Belgium the cops

killed Samira Adamu by suffocating her with a cushion because she refused to be expelled.

Today, mostly in the West, democracy (another name for capitalist exploitation) has founded its justification on anti-fascism. It promotes the memory of the atrocities perpetrated by fascism to better ensure that crimes committed by the anti-fascist camp will be forgotten(1). This is, in fact, customary for any «victor» in imperialist war. The victorious side only publicises the barbarities committed by the defeated side.

The information below is from the *Sunday Times* (9/9/1998) and is another example of labour camps which were built before the so-called Second World War and which could well have inspired the Nazis.

Between 1929 and 1939, under the government of the very socialist Ramsay MacDonald, 25 secret concentration camps were built in the most remote areas of England and more than 200,000 unemployed men were sent to these camps and put to work at hard labour. The men, who were interned in the centres for three-month periods, worked for up to nine hours a day, forced by gang marshalls to break stones, build roads and cut down trees(2). The *Sunday Times* reports

1- eg. the concentration camps in France during the Popular Front, those of the Spanish Republic or the American ones where all the Japanese living on American territory were imprisoned.

2- Cf. In Ireland, at the same period, to prevent starving proletarians from thinking, the government constrained them to build roads leading nowhere. Those roads were named the «famine roads».

that, when they arrived at the camps, the men were issued with hob-nailed boots and a pair of corduroy trousers before being assigned to a wooden hut dormitory. The men who refused to go to the camps were told their benefit would be stopped once and for all.

It was Sir MacDonald, vanguard socialist in the service of capital, who had this brilliant idea of submitting unemployed proletarians to 3 months of such hideous living conditions and slavery that they would never refuse a job again, even the most vile.

The end of the twenties and the thirties were years of worldwide crisis. Governments obliged the excess labour force - the unemployed - to remain mobilised by imposing forced labour on them, aiming to rid the cities of the emerging agitation. The so-called Second World War, which sent hundreds of thousands of proletarians to the front line, was the fulfilment of this massive clean-up operation. However, for the ten years prior to the war preparations were being made. Concentration camps in England provided very cheap labour and considerably decreased unemployment figures. The proletariat was placed under control and enrolled into the labour camps by force before being sent to the army.

Although all the governmental reports «disappeared», some of the prisoners, who are more than 80 years old now, confirm that there were concentration camps, camps of slavery and terror. «The treatment the inmates received was degrading and inhumane. When I look back I realise that the way we were treated was not much different from the way the Nazis treated people» recalls Willie Eccles, who was sent for three months to the camp at Glenbranter when he was 18.

«They were like chain gangs without the chains. It was slave labour. They used to stand over us and bawl and shout at us to work harder, but we used to work hard anyway just to keep warm. None of us wanted to go there but we were forced to.» adds Charles Ward, 85, who in 1932 was also sent to a camp for

three months.

This policy was called the New Deal (Roosevelt went on to borrow this term and to use it in the USA) and it has recently been put on the agenda in Britain by the very socialist Tony Blair.

Blair's New Deal says that all the unemployed under the age of 25 will lose their employment benefit if they refuse offers of a job. That is to say that, whatever the wage and the working conditions proposed, they have to accept, without question or any demands.

The rule, today as much as yesterday, is «*shut up and accept it*» if we don't want to die of hunger.

Today, as much as yesterday, the same capitalist causes produce the same camps...

Be it in Italy, Israel and maybe soon in England, the state's concern is always the same: to force the proletariat by terror to submit silently to the successive attacks of this system of misery and death.

If they could throw us into the sea, we would have become fishfood a long time ago. But they cannot<sup>(3)</sup>. Therefore, we are imprisoned in concentration camps, labour camps, refugee camps, detention centres,... They don't give food, they make us docile and stupid in order for us to leave, a flower in our gun, for the next generalised massacre.

However, we proletarians today, devalorised, impoverished, sacrificed on the altar of value, are not powerless. Throughout the world, in a sporadic and non-centralised way, our class resists, rebels, deserts, sabotages,...

We are rich with the historic experiences of our class. Let's reappropriate the collective memory of our struggles of yesterday and centralise our fights of today. Let's organise to put an end to this system that feeds itself on our blood!

It is only for capital that we are excess proletarians; for communism, «proletarian» goes with «revolutionary»!

Let's destroy the monster  
that is destroying us!  
Death to capital!  
Long live Communism!

3- Although this proposition was seriously made by the some members of the Israeli government to get rid of the «Palestinians».

# Bangladesh... not just floods!

Capital has asserted itself as the world wide mode of production since the XVth century. Since then, it has cemented every brick in every mine, factory, office where it extracts surplus value from those who it exploits. It oils its machines, air planes and computers... with the blood of those from whom it extracts surplus value. Capital has developed through poles, poles where wealth is concentrated coexisting with poles of poverty. But it imposes its dictatorship everywhere, in the North as in the South, in the East as in the West.

The worldwide essence of the capitalist mode of production also determines the international character of the proletariat as a universal class, containing within itself the everyday reality of exploitation as well as all the necessary conditions for a revolutionary movement against exploitation. Everywhere, in ever worse and terrifying conditions, proletarians are forced to sell their only property, their labour power, in order to survive. Therefore, it is as a worldwide class that they are led to struggle so as to oppose the rapacity of the bourgeoisie. Whether black, yellow or white, wearing overalls, sarongs or turbans, they are confronted by the social contradiction at every latitude.

It's therefore not just in the United States or in France that class struggle takes place. Strikes, riots, mutinies and expropriations have arisen in Nigeria, Burma, Indonesia, Mexico, Algeria, Iraq... violating the social peace the State is attempting to impose. It is obviously not in the interests of the bourgeoisie to emphasize that the living conditions of proletarians lead to violent opposition to the same social system everywhere. Therefore, everything possible is done to avoid proletarians in France or America identifying with the reality of their class brothers in Africa and Asia, and vice-versa. Far better to envelope Rwanda and Iraq in television's chaotic images of poverty, catastrophes and savagery than to zoom in on the social determinations at the origin of the conflicts taking place. In this way the model of a world divided into rich countries and poor countries is perpetuated while the existence of social classes is conveniently swept under the carpet. Shifting the contradiction is another way in which the dominant ideology denies the reality of class struggle(1).

What happened in Bangladesh some years ago will enable us to illustrate all of this.

1- This ideological reality is not the prerogative of the multinationals of bourgeois information. Smaller ideological enterprises such as trotskysts, maoists, councilists and libertarians put forward exactly the same model. A superb caricature of this can be seen in the publications of the ICC (International «Communist» Current) in which all the racist posturings of this vision can be found : «central and peripheral countries», «Iraqi Lumpenproletariat», «desperate Mexican peasants»... For a more detailed account of this issue, see Communismo 41 and Communisme 43 «The eternal Euroracist Pacifism of Social Democracy».



**V**iolent social storms have been sweeping through Bangladesh on a regular basis for several years. Bangladesh is a piece of land barely a quarter of the size of France, packed with a population of 120 million. Yet, worldwide, the issue attracting the media's attention is...the floods! This dimension of Bangladesh's reality is much more presentable and in tune with what the viewer wants to see. In addition, floods or monsoons are a lot easier to explain away as inevitable than are riots or strikes. For the bourgeoisie, what would be the point in shaking the dominant image of a country made of «too much water and too many poor people»?

However, it is not possible to completely black out the existence of class struggle and some information gets through. The following is a resume of news clips from various newspapers in December 1994: «On December 4th 1994 thousands of poorly-paid and poorly-equipped police officers, auxiliary militiamen (Ansars) mutinied, taking over two barracks, 22 officers hostage and managing to take control of the headquarters and training centre in the capital, Dacca. After 4 days, by which time the mutiny had spread to other provinces, repression began in earnest. The army's special forces attacked the occupiers barracks, using very significant measures: artillery guns, rockets, helicopters, gas, armoured cars..with an official toll of 4 deaths and 50 wounded.»

The first ideological image is therefore shattered: there are more than just disarmed, ragged, soaking-wet beggars in Bangladesh! A different technique is now needed to explain events and, this time, the media choose to fall back on the traditional explanation of struggle between «official» and «opposition» parties.

What have the merchants of disinformation put together to explain the

mutiny? The bourgeoisie presents the events as a further episode in the war «for power» between two women: one the prime minister and president of the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and the other the leader of the «opposition» Awami League. The good citizen can turn over and go back to sleep, happy in the knowledge that these events are well-circumscribed within the democratic world, where class struggle is absent. The journalists performed their role to perfection. But what exactly is it that the dominant class wants to hide from us? If even cops are caught up in the social contradiction to the point of mutiny, the situation must be a lot more socially explosive than the bourgeoisie dares to admit.

Indeed, the mutiny in December 1994 in Bangladesh was just one episode amongst many in a long history of class struggle.

A social movement was paralysing the country at the very time that the mutiny took place. The bourgeoisie has carefully separated these two moments in order to create a different reality, its truth, its information, to eternalise its reality throughout the world. Even if the struggle failed to centralise its demands, its leadership, we know that these two movements are one and are a manifestation of the proletariat's struggle to assert a single community of interests in opposition to the exploiters. In fact, scratch the surface of the mountain of disinformation piled, for the reasons mentioned above, on this region to realise that these events, which came to a climax in 1994-95, are merely the result of a long process of struggle beginning in the 1980's. The following is a brief outline.

**T**he global recession of the 80's had its impact on Bangladesh too. There, as everywhere else, austerity measures were imposed at an infernal rhythm so as to set the profit machine

Far better to envelope Rwanda and Iraq in television's chaotic images of poverty, catastrophes and savagery than to zoom in on the social determinations at the origin of the conflicts taking place.

## Bangladesh... not just floods!

back in motion. Wage cuts, price increases, devaluation, massive lay-offs... were put down as consequences of «natural disasters» (floods, hurricanes - see text at the end) and the Gulf War in 1990-91(2). All of these measures hugely intensified poverty in the region. The unbearable conditions pushed our class brothers, with nothing to lose, to increasingly violent struggle: wildcat strikes in 1989, a vast movement of social upheaval from October to December 1990, culminating in violent riots, notably in the capital, Dacca.

The struggles reached such a level over this period that the State decided to dispense with the services of General Ershad, who came to power by way of a coup d'état in March 1982. Thus, the bourgeoisie shed one skin at very little cost to itself and passed new constitutional reforms as further camouflage. The Awami League and the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), as new and therefore more credible actors, intervened in the political scene to maintain and reinforce exploitation. But the existence of the parliamentary circus failed to resolve a thing. The BNP, now in power, merely continued of the capitalist program and took further measures towards the «rationalisation of the economy». 30,000 «surplus» proletarians laid off on the railways, in the jute industry, and at Biman, the airline. Little information has reached us as to how our class reacted to those measures, but it is impossible to completely hush up the violent conflicts which regularly jammed the cogs of the capitalist machine between 1992 and 1996. Here are some examples.

In January 1992 demonstrations by

several thousand young workers were brutally repressed in Dacca. Their demands were said to «seriously threaten the balance of payments», according to the torturers entrusted with their repression. In February 1993 capitalists, enraged by striking textile workers, sent their guard-dogs in to quieten down the exploited workers who were refusing to work. This action was fully supported by the world bourgeoisie. There was no question of the World Bank giving an inch: austerity measures, here and elsewhere, had to hit hard. Capitalism must extract ever-increasing profits, make ever greater gains. Experts from the European Union urged the government to go even further in its restructure and to close down twelve unprofitable textile factories, resulting in the lay-off of several thousand workers. But the workers wouldn't take this treatment lying down and went out on strike. New polarisations emerged, such as divisions between «Hindu» and «Muslim» workers and the appearance of a «Mongolian» nationalist guerilla group, diverting proletarians from the direction of the struggle. The main trade unions played their traditional safeguarding role and tried to recuperate the struggles. In March 1993 the trade unions tried to put themselves at the head of the movement by calling for a «general strike». The work stoppage was massively overtaken by workers who had already been struggling for several weeks. The national economy was paralysed by blockages of most of the main roads and railways and social unrest affected all sectors.

In October 1993 four universities were temporarily closed, having been described by the government as «centres of conspiracy and terrorism». So great was the BNP's loss of credibility that, barely two years after coming to power, the ruling classes were already considering playing their classical card of alternation between bourgeois par-

ties. Another team began to prepare for power. From November 1993 and throughout 1994, the Awami League and other so-called opposition parties prepared for the fall of the government by blaming the BNP for all the misery steeped on the proletarians since the collapse of the military regime. In an attempt to gain credibility, and to get the workers behind its banner, the Awami League started a boycott of the already much discredited National Assembly and called for the population to demand a further electoral merry-go-round.

But none of this prevented social tensions continuing to rise throughout 1994 and by the 26th of April Dacca was completely blocked by strikes. Day by day, there was growing opposition to the ever-more draconian austerity measures, recently imposed by the World Bank. The bourgeoisie was becoming increasingly concerned. «What we need for 'good business'» they said, «is a rapid return to social peace». With this in mind, foreign investors urged the government to be tougher on the strikers. «We're concerned with essential problems like order, security, and governmental stability. Otherwise how can we expect to attract any investors?»

Strikes and demonstrations followed one after the other in various sectors in April, May and June 1994. In July the opposition tried to take control of the social movement, calling for a day to «defend democracy against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism». But these attempts did not mix well with the demands of proletarians struggling to better their living conditions. The trade unions mounted their defences so as to back the Awami League, organising peaceful work stoppages, shutting workers away at home or in factories with their arms crossed in order to prevent any extension of the conflict. They also negotiated with the government to make

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2- The deportation of 90,000 workers from Kuwait and Iraq increased the misery of more than a million people. A single expatriate proletarian had managed «to support» an average of twelve people by sending back part of his income to his family.

a few deals, which they then presented as «great victories for the workers». As a reward for the trade unions' efforts the government dropped charges against 10 union leaders, at the same time as 5 proletarian militants were sentenced to life imprisonment for «terrorist activities», ie. organising demonstrations, strikes, picket lines and sabotages of production against the austerity measures.

However, the circus of union/government negotiations proved incapable of calming things down. During these struggles, violent confrontations took place between the hungry and the forces of bourgeois order, most notably in the port of Chittagong, a vital economic centre for the area. All traffic was systematically paralysed by the dockers and other strikers who joined them. Not a single boat was loaded or unloaded. In September 1994 further strikes and demonstrations took place in Dacca and in Chittagong.

According to the small amount of information which filtered through the bourgeoisie's blackout, class antagonisms rocking this area were intensified by the barbarous conditions in which capitalist exploitation was organised. One example among many: in September 1994, 200 workers - including children under 14 - were locked out of a clothing factory following several weeks on strike. The reason was simple: the workers had spontaneously ceased all activity and gone on strike, organising a resistance fund in order to put an end to the insults, blows, unpaid overtime, sexual harassment, wages lost for sickness or for time spent on the toilet. The bosses retorted by having 5 workers arrested for «terrorism», who were then locked up and beaten by the factory's thugs. Their wives met the same fate when they protested against this cruelty. In Bangladesh such brutality is the rule in the process of exploitation. It is not therefore surprising that every

strike and demonstration immediately expresses itself through direct, physical confrontation with the forces of Capital and refuses to be put within the pacifist framework extolled by those who try to convince us that we will only get satisfaction by remaining calm and reasonable.

Social agitation spread to the countryside and in October 1994 proletarians burned a large part of the jute harvest in protest against wage cuts. In the same month, 2000 children protested in Dacca against the government's decision to forbid them to work. It is often their meagre wages which permit entire families to make ends meet and, despite what moralising democrats say, it is not «parents' wickedness» that forces very young children to sell themselves, to prostitute themselves in factories or on sidewalks for a crust of bread. It is the poverty in which this society of death immerses proletarians, including children, which pushes us to prostitution - sexual or otherwise - at younger and younger ages throughout this squalid capitalist hell! Poverty, work, struggle - the circle closes.

In November 1994, new conflicts erupted in the textile industry and it was at this time that the class struggle reached an intensity not seen since 1989. Mutinies wreaked havoc on the security forces. In December 1994, on a background of strikes, demonstrations and riots across the country, entire barracks rose up and refused to obey the government. Corrupted by the social contradictions, themselves affected by the struggles, the usual repressive forces were no longer sufficient and the employers' white militia were brought in to guarantee the dirty work that the cops could not - and would not - guarantee any longer.

The bourgeoisie was obliged to use elite troops to crush mutineers and to attempt to restore order. The dead could no longer be counted... but de-

The trade unions mounted their defences so as to back the Awami League, organising peaceful work stoppages, shutting workers away at home or in factories with their arms crossed in order to prevent any extension of the conflict. They also negotiated with the government to make a few deals, which they then presented as «great victories for the workers».

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In spite of this the protest movement did not appear to stop. Social tension did not ease in 1995 and, on the 22nd January, thousands of textile workers went out on strike again. They made road and railway blocks across the whole country and confronted the forces of repression who fired on the rioters. Once again, the main seat of these social troubles was the port of Chittagong. Further demonstrations ensued and a home-made bomb was detonated as the prime minister's procession went past. By April, a further round of strikes commenced, affecting all major industries, but the transport sector in particular. The immediate demands were for wage increases, as well as payment of a «high living costs» premium. Confrontations with the white militia resulted in several wounded. The poison of elections was then injected once again into the veins of the proletariat in order to divert it from its struggle.

During a «day of anti-governmental mobilisation» called by the opposition parties in Dacca in November 1995 the stewards were overwhelmed and violent confrontations erupted. By the 30th December, Bangladesh was completely paralysed, with no trains, buses, boats or air planes running at all. Pickets blocked any goods from leaving all depots, stations, ports and airports. The national economy, so dear to the worldwide bourgeoisie, thus found itself in a sticky position, with nothing circulating, hence no business. Proletarians apparently had the capitalists by the throat, but we have very little information concerning their capacity to remove themselves from the murderous government/opposition polarisation put in place by the bourgeoisie. No details have filtered through on the real capacity of proletarians to draw lessons from their past struggles to confront ALL political parties, to oppose ALL syndicalist for what they really are: the managers of Capital.

1996 did not see any major changes in the social climate. The information that has reached us does not suggest a lull, but on the contrary, further confrontations erupted during strikes in January, requiring the army to intervene before calm was restored. There was a continuous military presence, the prisons full to bursting. Faced with such serious events, the bourgeoisie sacked the acting prime minister and organised yet another electoral charade. Military units marched on Dacca and the possibility of a military coup came onto the horizon as another solution to the social struggles. The June 1996 elections were peppered with further incidents resulting in 20 deaths and 300 wounded, but it is very difficult to distinguish partisan struggles between various electoral fractions from the class struggle waged by the proletariat. Finally, the soldiers returned to their barracks and the Awami League was declared victorious. Although, this time, all of the parties had backed the spectacle of the ballot box, we have information that rate of abstention was very high, but, unfortunately, we do not know the exact figure.

**D**espite the distorted pictures broadcast by the media, or even in the face of their total silence, such information confirms, yet again, the universal existence of class contradictions. When the proletariat struggles, be it in Los Angeles, Dacca, Lagos(3) or Paris, it struggles against the same attacks on our conditions of survival, which is why the bourgeoisie reacts in the same way everywhere. The bourgeoisie takes advantage of our weakness to swing social crisis in its favour. The following are examples of how they do so:

- by organising democratic alternation, swapping a Clinton for a Bush, or a right-wing for a left-wing party.
- by launching further «adjustment

3- See our text about the development of the class struggle in Nigeria in Communisme 41, which also tried to break the wall of silence surrounding proletarian struggles in the region.

plans», «privatisation», in short, by further attacks on our class which always aim to extract ever more surplus labour, all in the name of «modernising production methods» and increasing the competitiveness of its companies.

- by keeping so-called opposition parties and unions in reserve so that, during the inevitable social struggles, they can try to quieten things down by following the direction of the movement and steering it towards negotiations. If these measures fail, then they will call further elections, a new government, another 24-hour general «strike».

- by encouraging competition amongst the proletariat, developing nationalism, dividing proletarians and setting them against each other. In this way, they try to stop all direct responses to the new austerity plans, developing all kinds of new polarisations - inter-religious, inter-ethnic, even corporative and regional.

Every time the proletariat asserts its own interests the bourgeoisie is intent on diverting the struggle towards further, reformist objectives: left against right, civil against military, Moslems against Hindus in Bangladesh.

When the media do cover any aspects of the assertion of our class, they do so by diverting and encasing them in little boxes of reform of the system, totally masking the organic unity of our class interests. Our class, on the other hand, is still too weak to take on the contradiction with its own press, contacts, networks, communist groups,... It is still too easily hoodwinked by the false images presented by the bourgeoisie.

Today it is still difficult for many proletarians - despite the objective community of interests which unite them - to identify with the struggles of proletarians in other parts of the world. The media's silence, outlandish information and distortion of the truth make a very effective smokescreen over the class struggle in Bangladesh, when

watched from Europe or America. This is the case for the majority of social combats taking place in areas where the media coverage of an event depends on how spectacular an angle can be given to it: if it is not possible to reinforce the traditional «folklore» concerning a particular place, such as the floods in Bangladesh, overpopulation in China, the Indians in Chiapas, blacks in Los Angeles, then the spectacle is determined exclusively by a sordid calculation of the number of dead and the distance separating the information from those to be informed.

The multitudinous means of daily disinformation as regards the class struggle and the historic hushing-up of the communist movement are both examples of the terrorist assertion of a world in which exploitation (i.e it's essence) is categorically and systematically denied by the dominant ideology. The systematic organisation of disinformation is one of the pillars of the capitalist state just as the union and the political frameworks and repression.

**B**ANGLADESH... not just floods! By this small contribution we want to work towards breaking the wall of silence surrounding such struggles and to show our class solidarity with our fellow proletarians struggling for the same reasons, for the same needs, in Asia as in Europe, in America as in the Pacific.

What lessons can be learned from these struggles?

To support our fellow proletarians «over there» also means to criticise them. This community of criticism will reinforce the proletariat who will then no longer find itself weak in the face of the same enemies and the same traps they set for us. Thus we must point out the enormous weaknesses of the movement in Bangladesh since 1989:

- although the proletariat managed to make the bourgeoisie submit quite

promptly and once again proved its remarkable capacity as a class, the exploiters, even whilst shaken and sometimes overwhelmed, managed to reorganise themselves, passing through the same austerity plans in different guises: military dictatorship, the government of the BNP and, finally, the Awami League.

- even if the proletariat was often capable of struggling outside the opposition's framework, it must be noted that it did not manage to organise against the opposition, nor against all the organisms who have once again shown that their social function is not only to prevent any movement from erupting, but also to follow and frame any class movement so as to better ensure its defeat.

These two characteristics mark the limit of this 7 year wave of struggle in the region. The lack of organisation, centralisation and direction of the movement was prolonged by the proletariat difficulty in learning the lessons of past defeats, necessary to move forwards. Each time, the movements were massive, violent, and generally took place outside the bourgeois framework. But, each time, the incapacity of the movement to give itself its own direction led the defeated proletarians to the very structures which they should have done away with at the start of the struggle.

LONG LIVE  
THE PROLETARIAN STRUGGLE  
IN ASIA  
AND THROUGHOUT  
THE WORLD!

LET'S ORGANIZE  
OUR OWN INFORMATION  
NETWORKS!

THE PROLETARIAT  
HAS NO COUNTRY!

LET'S SMASH ISOLATION!

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## **Murderous floods and famines... thanks to nation and progress!**

In the first Century, Bengal was known for its gold, pearls, spices, and perfumes. At this time it was an important commercial centre with ports, roads and largely navigable rivers...

In 1406 a Chinese interpreter accompanying a trade expedition spoke of the area as «commercially prosperous», producing scissors, knives, swords, rifles, vases, painted objects, 5 or 6 types of cotton, handkerchiefs, gold-embroidered silk bonnets... with abundant farming of sesame, millet, beans, ginger, onions...

It was not until the arrival of English capitalists and the Progress they brought with them, that living conditions began to degrade little by little.

The East India Company set itself up and the English bourgeoisie traded at full pelt. It imposed its own trade rules and very quickly began producing the same cloths in England that it had initially imported. This resulted in a profound transformation - Bengal was shifted from a position of manufacturer to that of supplier of raw materials (cotton, jute). The consequences of this change were enormous for agriculture, which went from a auto-consuming polyculture to an exporting monoculture and meant that all land was then used for monoculture. From then on, as elsewhere, crises in production of this raw material, now practically the only crop, went on to lead to famines. The first of these famines was in 1770. We want to stress that it was capitalist progress itself which brought about the famines, not some local climactic or geographical conditions. The situation only worsened when an even more speculative monoculture arrived on the scene: opium. Destined for the Chinese market, English capitalists sold opium throughout the 19th century up until 1939. In 1947 India was divided in two: the Indian Federation on one side and Pakistan on the other, Pakistan consisting of two territories separated by 1,500 kilometres. A war broke out between West Pakistan and East Pakistan, the latter backed by India. Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) was created in 1971 as an outcome of the war.

If there's no mention of floods before the division of India it is simply because this area which suffers so much today was not yet inhabited. And for good reason! This area, composed mostly of the southernmost delta

of the Ganges (mostly swamps and mangrove groves!) remained virtually deserted until 1947.

What was it that drove massive numbers of proletarians into this area? Nothing but inter-imperialist interests.

Backed by England, the partition of India (officially done on the grounds of preventing religious wars between the Hindu majority and the Moslem minority ) ends up by placing the Hindus into the Indian Federation (now modern India) and the Moslems into East and West Pakistan. This division meant the forced movement of large numbers of proletarians, something which today would be considered ethnic cleansing. East Pakistan (future Bangladesh), is economically the least interesting part of Bengal, the Moslems placed there because of, in part, the pressure of the Hindu bourgeoisie who wanted the most prosperous area for itself. This was fully supported by the English capitalists who were keen to maintain trade relations with their Indian ex-colony.

The artificial increase in Bangladesh's population as a result of massive forced moves was soon followed by a demographic explosion. This is why this tiny state, barely 5 times the size of Belgium, has ended up with a population of 120 million people (12 times as many as Belgium, twice as many as France) and a population density of 810 inhabitants per square kilometre. In the areas most hit by floods there are easily 1000 inhabitants per square kilometre. (As a reminder, Belgium and Holland, listed amongst the most populated countries, have a density of «only» 350 inhabitants per square kilometre.) All of these people have to go somewhere. The only solution that international capitalism has found is to push these people further into the swamps mentioned above. Hundreds of thousands of proletarians drown as the waters rise and they are squeezed between strict political borders and the sea. And all of this thanks to the progress of capitalism which forced people to move to areas in which no one would have considered living in previously. The hundreds of thousands drowned are the price to pay for the continuation of Progress and the Bangladeshi Nation.

# A repugnant spectacle

We don't want to enter into the polemic provoked some years ago in the Basque Country and in Spain as to whether or not the execution of Miguel Angel Blanco by ETA and the campaign of the Spanish State marked an irreversible qualitative jump in inter-bourgeois (imperialist) war; it is of far greater interest to us to denounce *the repugnant spectacle of popular adherence to the state's mobilization*.

The issue is not at all whether ETA is more or less criminal; even at a time when ETA was putting bombs in supermarkets and killing indiscriminately, the Spanish state never managed to achieve a popular mobilization on the scale achieved today in the face of ETA's execution of an individual directly implicated in the governmental party and thus in its repressive action. By carefully setting the scene using the increasing imbecilisation of public opinion, the state has succeeded in getting the citizens to associate with their master, amalgamating ETA's actions with what current dominant ideology considers to be evil incarnate: the Nazis and the concentration camps. Thus the extreme is reached of spectacularly comparing the situation of some guy held prisoner by the ETA with the Nazi concentration camps! It is hardly surprising that this comparison is never made when it is the Spanish state that is jailing, torturing or killing!(1)

The repugnant spectacle of radio and television campaigns for the «*blue ribbon*»(2) demonstrates *the State's capacity for democratic manipulation, the capacity of its apparatus to put amalgam into practice, as well as the importance*

*of the broadcasting media in this policy of manipulation and fabrication of public opinion according to bourgeois interests.*

It is also worth pointing out here that all political sectors have collaborated with this type of campaign (with the obvious exception of the accused: ETA and Herri Batasuna, its political wing). Indeed, even traditional allies of the ETA such as the other Basque nationalist groups or guerrilla groups from various countries have contributed. The example of the Uruguayan Tupamaros, in their current legalistic phase, is all the more meaningful since this group was always very close to ETA's positions and ardently defended its militants, involving itself, for example, in the struggle against their extradition. It is characteristic of all of this campaign of amalgam that the Tupamaros, who were never concerned by ETA's criminal activities when they were carrying out indiscriminate bombings resulting in the deaths of proletarians, yet now feel obliged to distance themselves from ETA when it is to do with the elimination of Blanco, a bourgeois, a man of the state. (According to certain statements made in the press it would seem that the same can be said about «Shining Path» in Peru.) (3)

Here is an example of how Rafael Larreina, a member of the Basque parliament and vice secretary-general of Eusko Alkartasuna, is moved and participates in the televised myths:

*«... now that two months have passed since the murder of Miguel Angel Blanco, we observe with a certain distance the consequences of this event and the facts that occurred subsequently. The slow-motion*

*crime of Ermua, barely a few days after the striking picture of Ortega Lara emerging from his terrifying captivity, triggered a reaction of horror and indignation without precedent that we all, independently of our political adherence, shared in this country. The popular reaction was equally obvious and strong and should serve as an element of reflection for the leaders of Herri Batasuna and the ETA so that they can determine whether or not they really are involved in the process of national construction and whether they accept and take note of the popular will and want the independence of Euskalherria.»*

Repugnance and hate are what we feel about this national unity of «*all, no matter what their political persuasion*», towards this unity for national reconstruction, this unity which calls for

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1- And here we are not only referring to the presidential and ministerial implication in the GAL affair (Felipe Gonzáles, supporting the campaign denounced here, mounted a defence of the GAL's torturing cops), but also, in a more generic manner, to police repression and the situation of prisoners in the jails of Spain or whatever other country.

2- The «blue ribbon» is the rallying sign displayed by all those who want to mark their adherence to the anti-terrorist campaign organized by the Spanish State.

3- Nevertheless, considering the manipulation carried out by the State in Peru, it is difficult to know up to what point these declarations emanate from the fighters of this organization or from a whole of collaborators of the government designated with the name of «Shining Path», thus aiming to spread confusion.

## A repugnant spectacle

4- Sectors of all kind are conscious of this qualitative step made by the State in Spain carried in the legitimisation of terror thanks to popular mobilization. So Jaime Pastor, in a report on the consequences of the execution of Blanco carried out by HIKA, wrote: «... a newly created script is being approved in order to give a greater social legitimisation for a merely police-based solution to the Basque conflict, which will, moreover, allow this erosion of liberties and rights to be exercised against any kind of activity of dissent against the prevailing political and social system. Thus, even if the all the measures announced to reform the Penal Code are not approved, the PP [Partido Popular] knows that it can count on favourable public opinion towards its propositions, thus favourable to a greater recourse to Orwellian techniques of surveillance and control of citizens' security.»

5- Published by Ediciones E.Z., apartado

more state, more democracy, more peace... that is to say more control, more repression, more police.

We know that the purpose of this campaign is the fortification of the State, we know that its biggest success is precisely popular participation in these demands for a more democratic State, for greater repression and we know that this campaign «against terrorism of the ETA» aims fundamentally to *fortify the bourgeois State*. We also know that this campaign is fundamentally preventive against any possible action by the proletariat which terrorizes the bourgeoisie (4). We know that this campaign hits the international proletariat, especially the proletariat in Spain and even more so the one that is in the Basque Country.

Driven by our repugnance and our horror for all this campaign of state control, driven by our desire to show our solidarity with the proletariat directly attacked by this impressive wave of laments, of domestication,

of affirmation of democracy and terrorism of the State, we publish the following translation of an excellent article entitled «*desprecio del lazo azul*» («our contempt for the blue ribbon») of which we don't know the authors and that was published in 1997 (in Spanish) in the EKINTZA ZUZENA magazine(5). The text goes way beyond the content announced in its title and is signed: «*Writing found at the University of the Basque Country.*»

We also want to express our solidarity with the comrades who, in these difficult times for the proletariat in the Basque country, have the courage to produce and to circulate texts like this, texts full of *contempt for the blue ribbon*.

## OUR CONTEMPT FOR THE BLUE RIBBON

Not for well-intentioned individual souls, but for the idea of democratic peace itself.

If we assert that the pacifism of the blue ribbon in which they want to make us believe, is false, it is not because we have no criticism of the armed violence of the ETA (or whichever other organization), but because we think that this history of mobilization against «*perpetrators of violence*» is a manipulated phenomenon that only serves to distract from the global and legal corruption upon which the game of capital depends: the daily violence that the State and Capital exercise on populations, dispensing a living death; the generalized prostitution or submission to money to which we are condemned and, finally, to hinder the grassroots politics seeking to rise up against the domination of money.

You embrace the bourgeois democratic institutions, proclaiming your faith in them and, in so doing, you accept their

violence, submission, deception. No power can maintain itself without its Ministry of Lies to impose itself on populations, so that they accept the servants of Capital and the state in good faith and also want to function as good servants. The essential thing is that the majority - which soon converts itself into all - does what it is asked to, but on the condition that each one believes that he is doing it willingly, of his own volition. They obey Pharaoh's slaves. It is the same thing! Our production of skyscrapers and of means of transport which are not used for any of the things that they say they are and our proliferation of senseless things without any real utility, is, after all, the same as the construction of pyramids for eternity. The same majority, the same blindness, but this time based on the decision, the choice, the will of everyone.

Stand very close to any pavement to observe the traffic jams that occur thanks to the personal car (democratic institution par



excellence) and you will see how, in fact, everybody (the majority) goes more or less at the same time to the same place, but each on his own account, in his own car and of his own volition. Remind yourselves that this bone-shaker they sell us as a means of transportation (and that actually entailed the death of useful transport like the tramway or the railway) demands the regular and increasing weekend and holiday-time sacrifice of thousands of lives, far more than all terrorism put together (quite apart from its contribution to pollution, motorways, taxes, small wars over gasoline over at the limits of development...). But of course, they make us believe that we have chosen this, when in fact it has been imposed. No one asked for the car, it was the domination of development which required the creation of needs in order to maintain the illusion that money can satisfy such needs (that were not needs before), to continue to make work (without need), to entertain the masses, finally, to circulate capital and maintain the institutions of the State. Then, the fact that thousands of people die, can be camouflaged as carelessness, accidents or bad luck, in short, as something natural that we must resign ourselves to accept.

Something else that they want to make us believe, by way of endless electoral shows, is that the bourgeois institutions represent the people. That is to say that the sum of individual opinions on the faces and names offered to them is equivalent to the people. What an enormous lie! Therefore, as the people is no more than its lowest common denominator, the common man, there is no Christ who can represent it. (...). The majority is the majority of our opinions (created and directed by the media of mass education - family, school and, finally, morality) that can be easily collected, counted and which produce a whole on which the power establishes itself. But in no way we can confuse this with the latent force of negation in those hearts which have not been completely submitted to the faith - a faith in which everybody knows what he wants and where he is going, a faith in the future, through which death is administered.

And how do they do it? By preventing the people from living, creating an empty present with the excuse of a better future, an un-lived present in exchange for a future, for death, because the future is always unannounced death (waiting, empty time which is necessary to fill with something: boredom). Look at the propaganda, especially at the bank (the true churches of today). See how they are interested in the child already having a savings plan, even a personal pension plan! Let him start to sacrifice himself for his future right now! (or someone do it for him, which amounts to the same thing).

See how the notion of travel has been transformed: they lead us to believe that a journey consists of an empty stretch of road enabling us to arrive at a place in a way that neither the destination nor what happens during the journey is of

any importance. An empty time is created which has to be filled with something, of course (TV, music,...). The ideal to be reached is for the emptiness to be no more than a bureaucratic formality. This criteria can be applied to what they sell us as being life. From childhood, we are set goals to make us believe in their lies to the point that we assimilate them as if they were our own ideas. So death arrives to us without us having realized what happened.

The work that is done is really useless (seeing that it doesn't obey real needs but the needs Capital). As for this free time that one buys (leisure with work, peace with war, glory with sacrifice, wealth with savings for some or with exploitation for others), it cannot be a time naturally distinct from work-time, war-time or penitence-time. This time is empty. Just as peace won by war is nothing else than undeclared war, what one calls free time is actually undeclared work, calculated in a very precise way in fractions of time (the real currency of money), 15 minutes of happiness (in a Thai sauna), two and a half days of happiness (in the weekend escape), 1 month of happiness (to roast in the mediterranean sun): but deep down one knows that a ration of happiness must have been cut and determined by someone, calculated. And this is what is offered to the heart as a lie and to our desire as an insult. It is a lie that one can live a partly free life and a partly slave life; one is contained in the other and *«The price changes the taste of the sweet.»*

And so, here we stand before an attempt to administer death, perfect domination, the reduction of the people to a mere mass and which, in spite of all, is always hindered by the latent refusal of the people to let itself be reduced to this whole and this idea. It is the war of common sense against the fixed and dominant ideology.

We could talk of the miseries that the empire of development necessarily creates beyond its limits, miseries that are largely put up with but that we must not forget are no more than the misery of wealth which results in the majority living on substitutes: whether one considers apartments to be houses, plastics to be textiles, choses not to pay for a driver or a wagon, but to be the driver oneself and to like it... There are lots of examples in your lives, you just have to look and you'll find them.

Let it be clear that what is sold to us as peace is nothing but war and that the so-called system of liberties is nothing else than the same domination as always, improved and perfected.

If this domination falls or at least stumbles, it is precisely because it lacks what it needs the most: our faith.

**Writing found at the University of the Basque Country**

## OUR PRESENCE ON THE INTERNET

We have had an internet site and an e-mail address for some time now:

<http://www.geocities.com/paris/6368/>

**e-mail:icgcikg@yahoo.com**

We have put the main texts of our reviews in various languages,

our theses of programmatical orientation, etc. on it and have had many first-time contacts through this medium. We thought it necessary to place a short text introducing our group and explaining its trajectory on this site. We also judged it useful to publish this in our central reviews, because the text brings together and summarises a part of our history since 1978 and because it is always interesting to synthesise the trajectory and the political bases of an organisation.

Rather than being the fruit of the subjective efforts of a handful of militants, a communist organisation is first and foremost the result

## WHO ARE WE ?

of historical determinations that irresistibly push the proletariat to constitute itself as a class, to organise itself as a force, as party, distinct from, and opposed to, all bourgeois parties. The organisational effort of proletarian minorities, concretised in time and space by the creation of a communist group, is fundamentally determined by **communism as a movement** and by its **historical party**, i.e. by the accumulated memory of the whole of the experience of previous struggles, condensed into a programme. The creation of our group did not escape these historical determinations.

The Internationalist Communist Group (ICG) has existed since 1978.

We publish central reviews in French, German, English, Arabic, Spanish, Hungarian, Kurdish and Portuguese. We also have texts in Greek, Persian, Russian, Serbo-Croat and Turkish.

Our group has no national reality. It is not linked to any country and does not refer to the history of any nation.

Its starting point was the centralisation of a handful of militants coming from different continents, speaking different languages, who, from many different experiences of struggles and reflexions on the defeat of these struggles, were willing to develop and centralise their common militant activity worldwide together.

With the common political content of our ruptures, we then chose to formalise our discussions and polemics in a common organisational structure and define ourselves as the «Internationalist Communist Group».

**Internationalist** - Well aware that this term is redundant when used in association with the term «communist», we characterise ourselves as «internationalists» first of all to stress that communism, from its very origins and as the movement, excludes country, nation, national struggle. It signifies that our group is directly organised on an international level. We did not

first constitute our group as a «national party» and then later open ourselves up to the «international». We started directly with a central organ, translated into different languages of course, which always deals with the general interests of the movement, always stresses the homogeneity of the conditions of exploitation of the proletariat throughout the world and always puts forward what all these conditions have in common: the reality of capital and therefore of the proletariat and the conditions for the realisation of communism.

On another level, the term «internationalist» also allows us to dissociate ourselves from the many counter-revolutionary variants disguised as communists (Stalinists, Trotskyists, Maoists, Bordigists,...) who, by more or less shamefully supporting one or other so-called revolutionary nation, allow dominant ideology to amalgamate communism with the red-painted capitalism of the so-called «communist countries».

**Communist** - From time immemorial, all the bourgeois fractions (Versaillais, fascists, republicans, Stalinists, liberals,...) have fiercely attacked the spectre constantly haunting the capitalist world: communism. However, revolutionaries (and our modest grouping no more than the others) never let themselves be impressed by the flood of insults and the continuous falsifications formulated throughout history against communism. Communism - the human community, the collective being, the classless society - remains the perspective for which we passionately fight. It is as communists that, facing the capitalist catastrophe, the dictatorship of profit and money, the constant degradation of our living conditions, we loudly and clearly demand the abolition of this world of death, the abolition of private property, of the state, of the exploitation of man by man. With our comrades throughout history and all over the world, we once again affirm the necessity for a classless society, without money, without work, where the free disposal of time and things will constitute the only terrain for human activity to blossom.

**Group** - By forming a group, we are once again expressing the

historical will of revolutionary proletarians to organise themselves as a force, to centralise themselves as party. If we do not claim to be a «party», it is because we know that true constitution into class (and therefore party) does not depend upon any pompous self-proclamations, but upon a material qualitative step in the social confrontation against Capital, State, bourgeoisie. Therefore we consider ourselves to be a faction of the communist movement; we struggle to exist as an international nucleus of the centralisation of the proletariat and, as such, participate in the efforts of vanguard minorities to centralise the community of struggle that exists throughout the world.

**I**t is thus as the Internationalist Communist Group that we have chosen (for more than twenty years now) to carry on our international discussions. To reappropriate history - the communist programme - we have naturally centred our interest and discussions on the highest moment of rupture that our class has produced up until now: the international revolutionary wave of struggles of 1917-1923. The numerous texts published in our reviews which try to draw, without any ideological a-priori, the lessons of the revolution and counterrevolution in Russia, Germany, Hungary, America,... during that period are testimony to this collective work and the passionate debates it gave rise to.

But beyond the centralisation of the international discussion on 1917-23, our reviews also fight against all ideologies and take a stand on many questions: the criticism of science, work, economy, philosophy, texts against the State, reproduction of historical texts of our class («our class memory»), texts taking a stand on facts and current events, on historical polemics,...

Of course, it is impossible to describe here the real life of our group, the essence of the lessons we draw from history and even less so the content of our positions. However our reviews, texts, leaflets,... describe quite well how:

- communism, the classless society, does not mean the end of history but the beginning of the conscious history of the human species.
- capitalism, by its universal essence and by the simplification of class contradictions, creates the conditions for its own negation, the conditions for communism as well as the social force that will impose it: the proletariat.
- the revolutionary dictatorship of our class will abolish the state and will crush any attempts to restore value.
- democracy cannot be reduced to a form of capitalist domination but constitutes the substance of bourgeois dictatorship.
- the communist movement opposes all bourgeois parties of the «right» or of the «left», parliamentarianism, trade unionism and all the forces that maintain social peace.
- the affirmation of communism is the negation of the whole of present society, negation of private property, of money,... but

also of work, school, family, science,...

To give an overview of our contributions, we recently produced a general summary of the articles published in our reviews in French and Spanish; this brochure is available on request at our central addresses (post box or e-mail).

Besides the central reviews that we produce regularly, in 1989 we also published in Spanish, French and Arabic our «Theses of programmatic Orientation», the English version coming out in 1999. These Theses represent an attempt to synthesise the international discussion and the communist criticism that we have continued from our very origin. We did not want to elaborate the nth version of some or other holy text, but to present a «snap-shot», a moment, of the collective permanent work of programmatic restoration that we have started. Enemies of all bibles, with this kind of document we are only seeking an increasingly precise delimitation of the communist practice of rupture from capitalist society. Our Theses try to express the real movement of abolition of the established order; they are thus, of course, imperfect and unfinished and will remain so until revolution itself puts the pleasures of a life without money, class and State into practice.

**S**ectarianism is one of the characteristics of periods of social peace and groupings of militants themselves hardly escape the crazy logic of competition of a society centred on division and on the war of all against all. Aware of these difficulties and willing to fight against sectarianism, we try (just as we do in our internal debates) to systematically put forward *our convergence* in the framework of the international community of struggle.

In this sense, we call on all those who continue to fight against a world based on the exploitation of man by man to appropriate our texts for themselves, to reproduce, circulate them and to consider our reviews as theirs. The result of collective works, our texts are no one's property in particular, they belong to a class that is living and fighting to abolish its own condition as an exploited class, and hence all classes, all exploitation.

Just like the revolutionaries who preceded us, we conceive our press as an indispensable means of revolutionary propaganda, collective agitation, programmatic development, action.

We want our texts to be subjected to a militant reading, discussed, criticised and used to confront other positions in order to clearly define the terrain of revolution and counterrevolution and to support, always more determinedly, the revolutionary direction imposed by our class in its constitution as a class and a worldwide historical force.

## Internationalist Communist Group

# P u b l i c a t i o n s



COMMUNISME n° 51  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN FRENCH

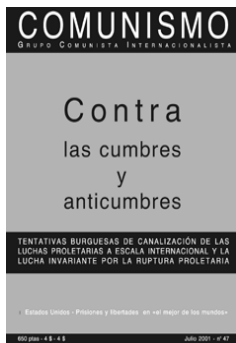
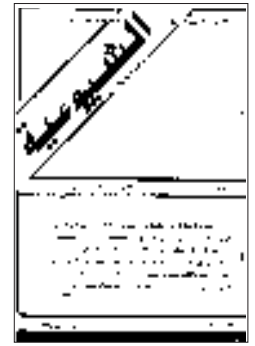
LE KOSOVO ET LES BOMBARDEMENTS DE LA YOUGOSLAVIE PAR L'OTAN  
ÉNIÈME ÉPISODE DE LA GUERRE DANS LES BALKANS

- LA GUERRE DANS LES BALKANS ET L'INTENSIFICATION DE LA LUTTE ENTRE ÉTATS BOURGEOIS
- LA TENDANCE À LA GÉNÉRALISATION DE LA GUERRE EN EUROPE
- LA RÉSISTANCE PROLÉTARIENNE À LA GUERRE
- NOUS SOULIGNONS: MISÈRE DE L'HUMANITARISME!

- NOUS SOULIGNONS: AMÉRIQUE LATINE. CONTRE LE MYTHE DE L'INVINCIBILITÉ DES FORCES RÉPRESSIVES.

AL SHU'ĀA n° 6  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN ARABIC

- CARACTÉRISTIQUES GÉNÉRALES DES LUTTES ACTUELLES
- QUELLE RÉDUCTION DU TEMPS DE TRAVAIL
- "ILS NOUS PARLENT DE PAIX... ILS NOUS FONT LA GUERRE!" TRACTS DU GCI



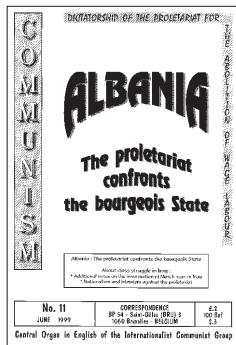
COMUNISMO n° 47  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN SPANISH

TENTATIVAS BURGUESAS DE CANALIZACIÓN DE LAS LUCHAS PROLETARIAS A ESCALA INTERNACIONAL Y LA LUCHA INVARIANTE POR LA RUPTURA PROLETARIA CONTRA LAS CUMBRES Y ANTICUMBRES

ESTADOS UNIDOS: PRISIONES Y LIBERTADES EN «EL MEJOR DE LOS MUNDOS»

KOMMUNIZMUS n° 2  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN GERMAN

- FASCHISTISCH ODER ANTFASCHISTISCH... DIE DIKTATUR DES KAPITALS IST DIE DEMOKRATIE
- ARBEITSDENKSCHRIFT: «JÜDISCHE ARBEITER, KAMERADEN» (1943)
- ES WAR EINMAL EIN STRAFANSTALTSPROJEKT
- DIREKTE AKTION UND INTERNATIONALISMUS
- NACH EINER SYNTHESE UNSERER GRUNDSÄTZE



COMMUNISM n° 11  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN ENGLISH

- ALBANIA: THE PROLETARIAT CONFRONTS THE BOURGEOIS STATE
- ABOUT CLASS STRUGGLE IN IRAQ:
  - BY WAY OF AN INTRODUCTION
  - ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE INSURRECTION OF MARCH 1991 IN IRAQ
  - NATIONALISM AND ISLAMISM AGAINST THE PROLETARIAT!

COMMUNISM n° 2  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN KURDISH

- GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STRUGGLES OF THE PRESENT TIME.
- REVOLUTIONARY TERROR BASED ON THE HUMAN NEEDS IN OPPOSITION WITH THE WORKERS' RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES.
- DOWN WITH ALIENATION OF THE TERRESTRIAL AND CELESTIAL WORLD.
- LONG LIVE THE HUMAN COMMUNITY !



KOMMUNIZMUS n°5  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN HUNGARIAN

- ALBÁNIA : A PROLETÁRIÁTUS A BURZOÁZIA ELLEN
- A BURZOÁZIA GYÖNGYSZEME
- AD`NÉLKÜLI ORZÁG
- A KAPITALISTA ÁLLAM FEJLŐDÉSÉNEK NÉHÁNY
- IDŐSZERŰ PÉLDÁJA

COMUNISMO n° 4  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN PORTUGUESE

- CARACTERÍSTICAS GERAIS DAS LUTAS DA ÉPOCA ACTUAL
- CONTRA A IMPUNIDADE DOS TORTURADORES E ASSASSINOS
- AVANTE OS QUE LUTAM CONTRA O CAPITAL E O ESTADO! (CONTRA O MITO DA INVENCIBILIDADE DAS FORÇAS REPRESSIVAS)

