

# COMMUNISM

INTERNATIONALIST COMMUNIST GROUP

## Bourgeois attempts to channel proletarian struggles on an international scale and Invariant struggle for the proletarian rupture

**AGAINST SUMMITS AND COUNTER-SUMMITS**

- **Empire** or the modern hiccups of the old revisionism
- **Greece** : *"MERRY CRISIS AND HAPPY NEW FEAR!"*

Central Organ  
in English  
of the  
**Internationalist  
Communist  
Group**

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If our positions interest you - if you want to discuss them or to work with us - contact the INTERNATIONALIST COMMUNIST GROUP by writing to the following address (without mentioning the group's name on the envelope):

NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS :

B.P. 33  
Saint Gilles (BRU) 3  
1060 Brussels  
Belgium

<http://gci-icg.org>  
email: [info@gci-icg.org](mailto:info@gci-icg.org)

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Saint-Gilles (BRU) 3  
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## WARNING

We wish to thank B. Vandomme who as "chief editor" of this review allows us to legally publish and circulate our press. Nevertheless, this person does not answer politically for the content and the positions expressed in our press. On the other hand the responsibility and the production of our articles are the result of a collective activity - this is the reason why the articles are not signed. They are the expression of a class that lives and struggles to destroy wage-labour and therefore all exploitation, all classes.

The editorial staff

# Editorial

The myth of a world without contradiction evaporated before it took shape.

“Façade restorations”, and successive governments following one another at an ever more frantic pace,

face a multiplication of inter-capitalist armed conflicts. The bourgeoisie can no longer define the future other than as an ever-escalating crisis. The cornered bourgeoisie is finally incapable of hiding the horrible rising doubt, about the permanence of its own system: capital suddenly feels insecure about its destiny.

Bosses, trade unionists, politicians, managers, ideologists, scientists, merchants, etc., i.e. all of the capitalist administrators are haunted by hesitation. Incapable of grasping the future of the world beyond capitalism, their limited point of view systematically clashes with the figures of their own economic indicators that force them to lay off, restrict, cut down, repress, etc.

Then, the doubt pattern becomes society’s dominant pattern. The capitalists are at a loss and have doubts about everything. About the future, of course, but also about their allies, about the competence of their subordinates, about their investment possibilities, about their own management programmes, about the benefits of liberalism as well as those of protectionism, etc.; all sectors of society begin to doubt. After the certainties of the post-war and reconstruction years, here now are black years where scepticism reigns supreme. Capitalist religion is turning into a big question mark!

But this doubt pattern also settles as the ideology prevailing within the very working class. Just as the bourgeoisie doubts about the possibility of an unlimited valorisation of capital, the working class doubts about the inelucta-

bility of the revolutionary perspective of the proletarian struggle, historically determined to destroy the capitalist society and to establish communism, a human society at last. Scepticism among the proletariat results in questions like: “Do we form a class?”, “What’s the need for getting organized?”, “Why fight? Our mottos, distorted by the enemy, are hardly recognizable. So why go on using them?”, etc.

The few classist organizations that try to stand against the widespread resignation are not spared either. The repeated assaults of this defeatist ideology, by instilling a false need to call into question their essence, is corrupting and disrupting them too. All you have to do to measure the devastating effects that this generalized doubt ideology has among organized militants is check the number of militant brochures around the world that, as opposed to “outmoded communism”, advocate re-evaluation, doubt and modernism as a line of conduct.

Our group is also confronted with this feature of present times. For instance, when we report in our publications the ongoing struggles of our class, doubts happen to arise even from close contacts of our group. “Was there a proletarian insurrection in Iraq in 1991, in Albania in 1997? What guarantees do we have that the information is reliable? What is the source?”, etc. Under the yoke of social peace, these comrades rely more on bourgeois disinformation than on direct evidence and testimonies brought back by local comrades. The problem worsens when the prevailing scepticism associated with life’s every day misery prevent solidarity and common action in support of these struggles.

Proletarians don’t relate to other proletarian struggles around the world. These struggles remain terribly confined to the factory, to the workshop, to the protection of jobs, etc. Their standpoint is marked by immediatism, localism, fragmentation and corporatism. Beyond the walls of the workshops and factories, it’s the void. “What will the future hold for us?” is such a dreadful thought that everybody gives up and thinks only of making a niche. On one hand, hammered out pictures of starvation, wandering, massacres, and pollution; denunciation in the media of financial scandals, generalized corruption at all levels of society, the “injustice” of Justice – all this contributes to the

Nearly two decades ago the bourgeoisie provided us with triumphant speeches about what it referred to as “big upheavals in the East”. The end of so-called communism was announced amidst a blaze of publicity and was supposed to sound like a brilliant worldwide harmonization. Mankind was going to enter a new era without war and full of prosperity. But the capitalist utopia of a world without contradiction promptly came up against its own reality. The same historical limits of capital arose all over again. Capital isn’t able to dissociate its positive poles of concentration, wealth, and “peace” on one hand, and negative poles of desertification, poverty, and war on the other. The myth of an eternal and smooth development of wealth, which the bourgeoisie lived on, is collapsing. Obviously, misery hasn’t vanished! The fall of the Berlin Wall and all the promises of change appeared for what they really are: the restoration of a façade. Capital has seen its contradictions sharpen: valorisation and devalorisation, development of and constraint upon productive forces, etc. The war between capitals is fiercer than ever.

## Declining Value of the US Dollar (USD)



trivialization of these very real disasters and generates a terrible feeling of powerlessness. On the other hand, the lack of class criteria, the dominance of particularism, the weight of individualism, the terror of repression that hovers over any actions that challenges the social consensus and somewhat reappropriates class struggle methods – all this makes proletarians, even the combative ones, apprehensive to assume the international and internationalist dimension of their own struggle. This generalized uncertainty is such that proletarians are blinkered, confined to a “here and now” standpoint and are cut off from any historical perspective; they no longer trust their force as a class.

Against the power of this ideology of doubt, against retreat into one’s shell, against the apprehension of the future, against the paralysing dictatorship of localism, particularism, and immediatism, it appears vital to wave the communist flag higher than ever. The bourgeois habitually rob our mottos from us, our flags, and our terminology (in order to distort them), but they cannot confiscate the programme they embody, they cannot destroy the militant practice that stands up for the one and only perspective contained in the concrete communist movement: i.e. the complete destruction of this moribund capitalist world state, the revolutionary abolition of wage labour, classes and Value!



These are the very unfavourable conditions under which, more than six years after the publication of the last issue of “Communism” in English (June 2002), we are publishing a new one. In spite of all the difficulties that our little group met in the development of this issue, it is essential for us to continue publishing material in English. Assuming the vanguard tasks of the struggle is a necessity and not a choice. Too often, proletarian organizations or even isolated militants remain confined to the geographical limits imposed by capital, and therefore consent to the frontiers that divide the world proletariat. Comrades! Today, and not “later”, is the time we must organize ourselves directly on an international level. “Down with all frontiers!” must become a motto that is part of the militant reality of all our expressions of

struggle. Let us overcome the frontiers, obstacles, problems of language, of “culture”, etc. and let us build up, let us organize, let us centralize our efforts and our strengths to abolish the Old World!

It’s in this frame of mind that the Internationalist Communist Group has produced this publication in English that reaffirms our refusal to submit to the “every man for himself”, the ultra-immediatism and aversion towards organization that presently undermine our class.

Comrades, let us struggle against the apathy that capital has forced down on us! Let us stop being objects, the objects of the exploitation of capital. When we fight back, the bourgeoisie threatens us with more and more misery. It claims that our lack of abnegation, of sacrifice, of dynamism, and a fortiori our struggles are responsible for the failure of society. But reality is the exact opposite. The less we struggle, the freer this society feels to sacrifice us on the altar of Value. Let us take our destiny into our own hands and let us change the world! Let us be the subject of our own history.

Comrades, faced with this militant effort that you now have in your hands, don’t remain passive. This review in English is a collective tool for struggle. Use it as a weapon, as a collective organizer. Don’t passively consume the revolutionary publications. We insist that the material we publish in various languages be circulated, criticized, improved, and surpassed, so that together we may strengthen our community of struggle against this agonizing and murderous world. The language quality of this issue remains, alas, poor. We nonetheless thank the close comrades who helped us out in the correction of the texts, and without whom this issue could not come into existence. In this way they take part in the proletariat’s collective and international action to abolish frontiers. We take this opportunity to renew our call to any English-speaking militant who could help us correct and improve the translations of our texts. Comrades, we need your help. Let us get together, correspond, and be critical, let us circulate the information about our struggles, let us read each other’s publications with attention and with the intent of overcoming all the limits imposed by the bourgeoisie.

Today more than yesterday, let us brandish communism in our confrontation against the whole of the bourgeoisie in its multiple facets, whether classical social democrats, nationalists, Stalinists, Maoists, fascists, environmentalists, etc. while putting forward the primary content of communism: i.e. the negation of the whole capitalist being!

Against Economy, against Politics and Religion, against Art, against Science and Progress, against Family, Labour and all Fatherlands, against wage labour, let us shout louder than ever: long live communism, long live the worldwide social revolution, and long live the proletariat’s international communist organization!

In spite of all those who promise, in a variety of ways, the survival of this society, we do not doubt that, like any living, social, historical organism, like any previous society, capital is an entity that contains its own lethal contradictions. Its overcoming is not announced by a new religion, but by the living negation that the class of men condemned to work in order to survive - the revolutionary proletariat - carries within itself.

We don’t “believe” in communism. It is apparent, in practical terms, in the movement that unfolds before our eyes, in the real movement aimed at the abolition of the established order. Manifestations of this movement have flared these past years in proletarian struggles in Iraq, Albania, Argentina, Algeria, Bolivia, etc. as well as in some initiatives (even modest ones) to transform the proletariat’s objective community of interests into an international, organized and centralized active community of struggle. No, we do not doubt that class solidarity will soon rise against this society based upon selfishness, individualism and retreat into one’s shell; a solidarity that emerges from the struggle of the proletariat to free itself from its chains.

**Let us not doubt  
about communism;  
let us struggle to affirm it!**

**Let us not doubt  
about our own strength;  
let us organize it!**

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# Bourgeois attempts

to channel proletarian struggles on an international scale

and

# Invariant struggle

for the proletarian rupture

## Against summits and counter-summits<sup>1</sup>

### General characteristics of contemporary struggles

Fifteen years ago we took stock of the situation by portraying the struggles that characterize the current phase of capitalism, without taking into account any elements particular to specific confrontations.<sup>2</sup> Since then, nothing has fundamentally changed with regard to those general characteristics. The current events confirm the main features that we presented then: international attempts to channel proletarian revolts and obvious signs of rupture, still systematically characterised, from the proletarian point of view, by strengths and weaknesses similar to those we had highlighted. The capitalist society catastrophe, that continues to take shape and aggravate<sup>3</sup>, as well as the tendency for radicalisation of the contradictions and confrontations, bring up once again the issue of the revolutionary leadership and the destruction of the international capitalist dictatorship. Facing today's barbarity, the issue of the proletarian social project (the social revolution, the destruction of the commodity society re-emerges as the only possible alternative.

This text, while presenting a brief analysis of the development of the balance of forces between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, is a denunciation of the "new" attempts made to channel the proletarian energies, and more particularly those that take shape through these summits and anti-summits that seem to dominate the international reality; various pseudo-radical ideologies that emerge from the clash. As a direct product of a debate among proletarians openly considering the issue of international power and destruction of the universal capitalist dictatorship, this text is also a contribution to the fight of the proletariat for its autonomy. It is then an element of struggle for the constitution of a self-direction breaking away from all the ideologies that intend to maintain us chained to the old social-democrat chariot, redecorated for the occasion with some new garments.

In Communism n°9, we had already signalled that the traditional forms of bourgeois containment had lost most of their lure. We pointed out that the traditional forms of struggle, such as "strikes" organized by the trade unions, pacific demonstrations, and even the national political system and its electoral circus

didn't trigger much enthusiasm anymore. *"While the old state mediations have lost their capacity to act as safety valves... the proletariat, which is supposed to be dead and buried, surges forwards ever more explosively, without accepting mediations, without being stopped by little strikes, peaceful demos, or promises of elections."*

*We also noted that contemporary struggles are characterised by violent and uncontrolled proletarian explosions directed against private property and all political and social forces that defend it. Since then, these explosions of proletarian rage against*

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1. All through this article, we use the terms "summit" and "congress", referring to these large meetings of international capitalist organisms that arouse proletarian hostility. And when we mention "anti-" or "counter-summits", we refer more precisely to the official protests of the bourgeois left wing, of its parties and official trade unions; protests characterized street demonstrations, parallel congress, or alternative forums or meetings.

2. Cf. "General characteristics of the struggles of the present time" in Communism n°9.

3. On that subject, read: "The capitalist catastrophe" in Communism n°9.



*the capital have repeatedly renewed, distinguished by "the firm and violent action of the proletariat which occupies the streets and violently confronts the whole state apparatus", as we mentioned in our text. The number of countries –Iraq, Venezuela, Burma, Algeria, Morocco, Rumania, Argentina, United States (Los Angeles)- where this type of explosion occurred has continually increased: Albania, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Ecuador, Argentina once again (Santiago del Estero, Neuquen...), Bolivia, Algeria (Kabylia). Every time, these examples reveal the same bourgeois incapacity to contain the struggle, marked by a violent opposition to everything that the present society stands for (including political parties and trade unions of the democratic opposition), and by expropriation of bourgeois property, more or less organized and led by vanguard elements. "By sweeping away the ancestral prejudices and challenging state terrorism, proletarians take what they need and try thus to destroy all the mediations which they are condemned to by capital: money, wages, work, etc."*

Facing this human tendency to directly re-appropriate one's own life, we noted, in 1993, that the bourgeoisie invariably counterattacked with their eternal "carrot, stick and disinformation". Manipulation of information and systematic concealment of the universal content of those revolts, presenting them as "student" riots, or "miners", "Palestinians", "Kurds", "Muslims", "Berbers"... We also pointed out that the bourgeois counterattack

was always based on the granting of some minor concessions and on the development of a selective repression, aiming at isolating the proletariat from its vanguard elements. In that text, we also analysed the weaknesses of the current proletarian struggles (short-lived riots, finally defeated, lack of permanent proletarian associationism, absence of a worker's press, lack of historic memory, ignorance of the revolutionary program...), as well as the need and possibility of overcoming these weaknesses and turning this discontinuous process of uprisings into an ascendant process leading to social revolution.<sup>4</sup>

### **The left-wing bourgeoisie's need to reorganize itself: renovation attempts**

The current left-wing bourgeoisie endorses the program that the social democracy has always defended: lesser evil, democratism, populism, trade unionism, pacifism, and support to the so-called "third world"... But in this society, where the devaluation of capital proceeds unbridled, where commodity must be labelled "new" to be sold and where ideological production is wholly integrated into the commodity production, the old ideas of the dominant class also need to be incessantly recycled to remain effective at containing the social assault. More than anyone else, the left-wing bourgeoisie's renovation attempts

comply with this tendency, widely subscribing to the "neo" fashion: "neo" Marxism, "new" left-wing, anti-"neo"-liberalism<sup>5</sup>...

The immediate motive of these renovations is directly generated by capital's necessity to respond to the deficiency experienced by the bourgeoisie every time the proletarian wrath expresses itself outside and against the traditional containment measures of the class struggle.

A third element that has forced the left-wing bourgeoisie to recycle and put on new garments to conceal its putrefying body and hideous face, resides in the socio-economic catastrophe of the countries labelled "socialist" by the bourgeoisie, as well as in the subsequent deterioration of the image of the related left-wing. In actual fact, neither the Trotskyites' critical support "with reservations" policy, nor the radical Maoism escaped the collapse. With an implacable clarity, the system those movements so dearly defended (unreservedly or not) confirmed to have never been anything else but the most brutal exploitation of the proletariat. Without the excuse of any revolution –or social counter-revolution, as they so often claimed-<sup>6</sup> the dominant class of those countries simply and openly declared its preference for "capitalism and democracy". The whole international left-wing bourgeoisie was then forced to repudiate its life-long love affair with these references and start

4. Cf. "General characteristics of the struggles of the present time" in Communism n°9.

5. To claim old stories as "new" is not a new phenomenon. On this matter, the bourgeois pretension to produce ideas as it produces commodities is present throughout the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century: cf. modern ideas, neo-classicist economists, neo-classicism, new wave, new age, etc.

6. It is hard to imagine what ideological U-turns and pirouettes these Marxist-Leninists had to do to explain that the shift from "capitalism to socialism" requires a violent revolution, but that the reverse is not true!



searching for other fables to try and remain credible. Only certain leftist factions of the social democrat spectrum continue, through their support for Castism, to obstinately cling to the defence (unreserved or not) of this monstrous Stalinist offspring called “socialism within one country”.<sup>7</sup>

But the left-wing bourgeoisie has no autonomy with regards to the right wing –even on a terminological basis- it follows in its wake. The particularities it endorses have always been determined by the evolution and contradictions of world capital’s cycle, and even when they seem different, looking closely, most of the time they appear to be the same old stories, told differently. So, to the ideologies of the worldwide bourgeoisie, victor of the Second World War –democracy, human rights, anti-terrorism, anti-authoritarianism, anti-fascism...<sup>8</sup>-, were added the ideologies of the factions most maltreated by free trade. In reality these ideologies were merely the vulgar antithesis of what the international free tradist dominant bourgeoisie presently still enforces. Every time the classic free tradist politics (which has nothing to do with anything “neo”) adopt a new terminology (globalisation, global village...) the old leftist bourgeoisie pseudo *anti-imperialist* defines itself on the basis of the “anti” prefix: *anti-globalisation*, *anti-neo-liberalism*...

Even the supporters of national liberation, considering their catastrophic results and their out of date discourse, started recycling themselves into *anti-globalists*...

In reality, there is nothing new under the capitalist sun. All this is nothing more than cheap chatter, a terminology made up by international capital, backed up by publicity agencies that seek to improve its image and enforce its present objectives pretending they are something novel. Capital is worldwide by essence; it has always been global. Historically, the starting point of capitalism is not the nation (as Marx said, the world market precedes the national market), but the revolution of the world market (that existed for quite a long time). This occurred at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century through the generalisation of value on a world scale and found its conclusion in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the impossibility of a



capitalist accumulation without a conquest of the production, and, finally, through the historic subsumption of humanity by capital. In capital’s history, the global always precedes the particular or local. Free trade is the general politic of the hegemonic faction of capital, well before the origin of the worldwide market or the origin of the worldwide money. This brings us back more than a thousand years ago, and since then, this politic has constantly opposed the interests of the protectionist factions. Free trade and anti-free trade (with or without the adjunction of the “neo” prefix), globalism and anti-globalism, the regionalism... are nothing but distinct expressions of the everlasting battle fought by the bourgeois factions. One defends the upholding of protectionism, source of its accumulation, and the other, more coherent in the strict application of the rule of value on an international scale, is willing to breach this protectionism.

If nowadays the instruments of fabrication of public opinion so insistently emphasize these tendencies, represented in a roughly caricature way by the international summits and bourgeois anti-summits, it’s precisely to trick the proletariat into a struggle that is not its own, and try to provide a response to the explosions of proletarian rage in which the exploited aim at re-establishing the struggle on real classist grounds. Social

democracy, as historic counter-revolutionary party intended for the proletarians, tries to pull it out of the streets and prevent direct action to maintain the proletariat’s submission to a number of mediations that turn it into a manoeuvrable support force to the inter-bourgeois struggle.<sup>9</sup>

### Ideas and personages of the “neo” left wing

During the 70’s and the 80’s, it called itself the “new left-wing” and gathered a wide spectrum of social democrat ideologies, claimed more democracy, more socialism, more anti-imperialism, more statism, more populism, cursing the large corporations, the monopolies...

Today, it goes by the name of anti-globalisation, anti-free trade, anti-International Monetary Fund, anti-worldwide trade... it preaches in the name of the civilian society and a diffuse citizenship and defines itself through an opposition against the financial and multinational capital, and, in its wide majority, in favour of the “Tobin” tax... But in reality, it’s the one and the same dog, even though it wears different collars.

Indeed, the left-wing bourgeoisie on the whole was able to become aware of its own incapacity to contain the proletariat, but, in the image of this greyish recycled paper hoping to be sold as “new”, it decided to mobilise its forces around the so-called “globalisation”. It tries to focus everything

7. The “left-winger” qualification has in reality no objective basis and is founded on pure ideology, varying according to the regions. In Latin America or in Europe, the apology of Stalinism is still considered left-wing politics, while in the countries from the ex-Eastern Bloc it is assimilated to fascism and generally to the extreme right wing.

8. Fundamental postulation of the world-state terrorism that will become universal from then on.

9. Which is not an easy task since, as we shall see, these attempts of social-democrat containment are frequently outflanked by the proletariat developing its own ruptures, cf. Seattle, Washington, Prague, Gothenburg, Naples, Genoa...



on the major assemblies of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, or any other apparatus of the world state of capital.

Trade unions and political parties in decrepitude, feminists and ecologists having lost their credibility, Keynesian economists, all kinds of pacifist and libertarian movements<sup>10</sup>, philanthropists, journalists, third-worldists and “anti-imperialists”, non-governmental organizations and humanitarian organisms, bankrupted farmers and animal-rights associations... all of them, without exception, seek a new political virginity by mustering against these meetings. Has-been political stars, completely disavowed, reappear in public and summon citizenship celebrations with the intention of defying the summits organized by official representatives. In the carnival-like context of these flashy folkloric parades, pacific and docile, under strict surveillance by the law-enforcement forces and the trade unions (like the powerful European Trade Unions Confederation), a heterogeneous variety of personalities like the leaders of the support committees to Marcos’ pseudo-guerrilla or that caricature of radical farmer called Bové,

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10. We don’t pretend to formulate here any critiques towards the revolutionary comrades self-proclaimed anarchists. We have already thoroughly explained our position on that matter, which is independent from any denomination or ideology, and, in future publications, we shall analyse with more depth the existing relationship between communism and anarchism. What we want here is to stand against the dominant ideology based on the famous bourgeois freethinking and its famous motto “I do what I want”, valid for individuals as well as groups, and the no less famous “freedom of criticism”. This ideology has had an enormous influence on the backstage of Davos, Porto Alegre, etc. It is nearly always accompanied by the immediatist and activist ideology, which, in all cases, constitutes an obstacle to the necessary organization of the proletariat as a unified political force, capable of endorsing a unique leadership for insurrectional preparation and action.

11. The social forum of Porto Alegre, which we shall refer to later, was elaborated on by all of these organizations, most of them international, with the support of the Workers’ Party of Brazil, the Unique Central of Workers and the official delegations of the “Movement of the Landless”, also Brazilian.



or even bygone personages of the “champagne socialists”,... try to constitute a “global option”, that truly brings nothing new in regards to the old bourgeois socialism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And let us not forget to add to this charming picture, the “anti-globalisation” support of openly rightist, nationalist, fascist and pro-nazi personages and organizations, like Charles Pasqua, former Minister of the Interior in France, or the LePenist youth of the French National Front.

The common denominator of the *anti-globalisation* holdall is the pretence of establishing a capitalism that would supposedly be “more human”, more democratic, that is to say, one which would reinforce the democratic and citizen domination



on the human species. The watchwords against globalisation, the IMF, the World Bank, “neo”-liberalism clearly confirm that it is not a matter of destroying capitalism, but rather perpetuating it.

### Anti-globalisation ideologies

The *Attac* association (Action for a Tobin Tax of Aid to the Citizens) –the name alone is already rather remarkable– is the meeting point of old social democrat structures and personalities, merely given a new physiognomy. It represents undoubtedly the most important international institution of the anti-globalisation scene. Alongside, stand many other networks, federations and organizations, a mingling of ideological movements, trade unions, political parties, charities, religious organizations and NGO, such as the Tri-Continental Centre, the Worldwide Women’s march, the 2000 Jubilee, the Continental Social Alliance, the People’s Global Action, the “Monde Diplomatique”, the “Ya Basta” association, the Global Resistance Movement, the Farmer’s Confederation.<sup>11</sup>

Although they introduce themselves under a variety of aspects and platforms, these organizations are, as we have previously said, the result of the leftist bourgeoisie’s recycling that by any means attempts to regain a bit of credibility, and to put forward, with regards to the current capitalist catastrophe, a reformist





alternative responding to the increasingly uncontrollable explosions of the international proletariat. Just to give an idea of how much the program of these organizations replicates the old bourgeois reformist program, we shall quote and emphasize some considerations extracted from the constitutive platform of the *Attac* association and the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre.

So, *Attac* does not claim to fight against capitalism, but against what it calls “financial globalisation”. To do so, it proposes to use the Tobin Tax and to hamper speculation. The platform starts as follows:

*“The financial globalisation aggravates the economical insecurity and social inequalities. It bypasses and belittles people’s opinions, the democratic institutions and the sovereign states in charge of the common interest. It substitutes them with purely speculative logic expressing the exclusive interests of international corporations and financial markets.”*

Its conception of the world is based on the good old social democrat method consisting in only considering the consequences, denying the determinant causes, and analysing only a few particularly notorious and harmful manifestations of capitalism, and omitting that these are the necessary and inevitable products of this whole social system. The same way social democracy founded its revisionism on the imperialism presented at that time as a novelty<sup>12</sup>, today *Attac* elaborates its own on the

pseudo-novelty of financial globalisation. Yesterday as today, something “new” had to be put forward to justify politics aiming at reforming capital. In both cases, it is only about diverting the proletariat from its struggle against the very foundations of the capitalist society.

The social democrat theories of imperialism and ultra-imperialism (Kautsky) constitute the keystone of this manoeuvre. Yesterday as today, this theory conceives capitalism to have entered a new phase, distinct from those in the past, and that would have transformed its essential nature. According to this theory, capitalism in its imperialistic phase formally centralises itself in a world decisional centre –or several ones in dispute-, based on the concentration of financial capital (defined as the merging of banking capital and industry capital), the large monopolist international corporations, the exploitation of capitals and the competition between corporations and governments for the apportionment of the world.

Therefore at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, just like today, the novelty would have then been the world domination of financial capital and monopolies, as it was explicitly theorised at the time by the right-wing social democrat Rudolf Hilferding. Lenin adopted this theory in his famous pamphlet on imperialism. Today as yesterday, with *Attac* and all the “anti-globalisation” groups, social democracy claims to stand against this financial capital, demanding more democracy and more state control from capital: “*people’s opinions, democratic institutions and sovereign states*”.

It is easily noted that behind these associations, these old and new physiognomies, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, new: it is nothing but the old rotten program of social democracy that has always called for a “*more social*” (sic), “*more human*” (sic) capitalism, against the notorious dehumanisation produced by capitalism itself. Today as yesterday, all of them put forward “*people’s opinions*”, that is to say populism, in opposition to proletarian classism. They put forward “*democratic institutions*” in opposition to the classist position of struggle against these institutions to enforce proletarian

dictatorship, and finally, they put forward the “*sovereign states in charge of common interest*” in opposition to the classic revolutionary standpoint of utter destruction of the bourgeois state, and all this bullshit about the sovereignty of the state. For, as Marx and Bakunin affirmed, the greater the sovereignty of the state, the harsher the oppression for its subjects.

*Attac* is an openly social democrat expression that, as such, denounces the increase of wealth and poverty and would like the citizen opinion and pressure on the states to regulate capitalism’s excesses.



12. Imperialism is a much earlier phenomenon than the time social democracy made it famous. Capitalism has always been imperialist. And the imperialist battle between the dominant classes to get hold of the productive forces even precedes capitalism as a production mode. If social democracy, and Marxism-Leninism in particular (under all its forms, from Stalinism, Trotskyism, to Maoism and Castrism, has turned imperialism into a new phenomenon, it’s only to justify the opportunistic changes in their policy, arguing that, precisely, things had changed. In that way, renouncement of the anti-capitalist struggle substituting it with anti-imperialist struggle (often mistaken with struggle against such and such nation) became the norm.

## Bourgeois attempts...

From an historic point of view, it defines itself as a right-wing social democrat expression, because it doesn't allege any opposition to capitalism itself and to the contrary, claims to be in favour of the freedom generated by capitalism to achieve its goals. It appeals to the governments for a control of this freedom (not to be abolished!). In no way does it criticize productive capital, nor, of course, capitalist exploitation (the extortion of profit is implicitly legitimated). It contests capital's benefits it considers excessive with regards to the undeniable widening of misery and the non-productive speculation. As if, once again, it were possible to deal with the consequences without dealing with the causes.

The constitutive platform of *Attac* states: "*Capitals' total freedom of circulation, the tax havens and the explosion of the volume of speculative transactions drive the states into a frantic race to obtain the favours of the big investors... Such evolution engenders a permanent increase in capital's income to the detriment of labour's income, the generalisation of precariousness and extension of poverty.*"

*Attac* doesn't even try to conceal its dread for the social revolution and admits its function is to avoid it at all costs, even if this is all said using a fashionable terminology: "*To respond to the double challenge of a social implosion and a feeling of political despair demands a civic and militant compromise.*" While we're

at it, and as it is also a very fashionable trend, we note that among the current social democracy, freethinker's style, or in the libertarian spheres, the whole of the classic concepts has been revised, re-interpreted and re-adapted to conform today's likings, by removing from them any classist content. Because it has reached decisive importance, we'll call attention to the falsification related to the concept of exploitation, keystone of the constitution of the proletariat as a homogeneous world class. According to the new interpretations, exploitation wouldn't be the surplus value extortion, which, directly and objectively, unifies in misery the whole proletarianized humanity, and which, historically, was decisive for the proletariat to recognize itself as a class.

That's why one can sometimes hear: "*they make me work so hard it is exploitation!*" As if work weren't always exploitation! Or: "*the workers of such and such country are exploited.*" As if those from the other countries weren't exploited! Or else: "*multinational corporations are exploitative institutions.*" As if local ones weren't exploitative! It is also said that "*monopolies exploit and destroy the planet's resource*" as if it weren't capital itself that exploits and destroys everything! As if capital didn't dictate the action of every business of this planet! We can also hear: "*imperialists exploit us!*" as if there were any non-imperialist bourgeois or any

bosses that do not exploit! And finally, we are asked to believe that we are not subjected to exploitation, that exploitation is not this world's rule, but merely constitutes an exception, an extreme case that only applies in very distant places. "*In the countryside, in the third-world countries.*" The further we believe it to be, the better it suits social democracy. So the remedy to this should be "*to manifest solidarity with their misery, accept austerity and protest less here*". To this we must add that, for them, *solidarity* has nothing to do with the classist concept of our struggle, but in reality belongs to the Judeo-Christian concept of guilt and sin and calls for a charitable attitude. It is then still a matter of a typical worldview of the dominant class and its openly bourgeois socialism.

This falsification leads to many others, such as the very concept of proletariat, which they mention as little as possible. And when they refer to it, they confine it into a mere sociologic category (*the workers*, as imposed by Stalinism), never as a constantly evolving revolutionary subject, which deprives the proletariat of all revolutionary perspective and denies the fact that it bears the only social project alternative to the current world: communism, the human worldwide community.

Returning to *Attac*, we can obviously note that the measures they propose are in full coherence with their social democrat worldview: taxation of the financial capital, major state control over profits and tax havens, claims for more democracy: "*to this end, the co-signers hereby create the association ATTAC (Action for a Tobin Tax of Aid to Citizens)... aiming at deterring international speculation, tax the capital's income, sanction tax havens, prevent the generalisation of retirement funds, and, in a general way, re-conquer the fields lost by democracy to the financial sphere and oppose all new renunciation of the sovereignty of states on the pretext of the 'right' of investors and merchants.*"

The Social Forum of Porto Alegre of January 2001 (that the organizers intend to renew every year) constitutes one of the examples of summit meetings (parallel anti-summit par excellence of the leftists bourgeoisie), a widened expression of the old social democrat ideology, elegantly







adorned with in vogue features like the congresses and counter-congresses. This forum's program closely resembles the invariant program of the left-wing bourgeoisie: *"pleading for a democratic agrarian reform with usufruct for the land cultivators, access to water and seeds, demanding cancellation of the external debt and reparation for the historic, social and economic debts occasioned by the external debt, elimination of the tax havens, effective application of human rights, opposition to all forms of privatisation of natural resources and public goods, calling for people's sovereignty and a demilitarised planet"*.<sup>13</sup>

The *"proclamation of social movements"* holds the program of all associations, trade unions, parties, present in Porto Alegre, and is filled with the most remarkable affirmations of the bourgeois credo. It is an apology for a capitalism devoid of all the harmful consequences inherent to its being, that engenders neither poverty nor misery nor unemployment, for a capitalism that does not destroy nature, for a non-patriarchal capitalism, for a capitalism without racism, in short for a fair and equitable capitalism in which everyone would live in perfect harmony. *"We demand a fair commercial system that ensures full-employment, food sovereignty, fair trade and well-being."*

That is a pre-eminently bourgeois discourse, according to which, after

correcting a few excesses and injustices, capitalism would embody... the well-being society! Cynical apologies of the bourgeois society into which the right wing doesn't even dare to venture, openly admitting this is all impossible!

Another recurrent aspect of this anti-globalisation ideology is the claim for an increased support for what they call the *third world*, some going as far as requesting 0.7% of the GDP. What the promoters of this program do not say, it is that such an aid for development does not mainly apply to hospitals, schools or other projects linked to capitalist development, but it is also directed (nearly the whole of it, in certain countries) into the financing of local armies (so they can buy weapons from the countries that provided the aid), financing and training of police officers specialised in anti-subversive and anti-riot action (it is through those aids the Algerian, Peruvian, Congolese torturers are offered training in France, Belgium, etc...), buying tear gas produced by Shell with the raw materials from those "third world" countries, the support for conducting massacres ("genocides", "holocausts"), like in Rwanda...

This is, roughly, the *anti-globalisation* ideology designed by social democracy, or more precisely, by its right wing. But some expressions are notably more left orientated, and correspond to other factions of this historic party of bourgeoisie destined to the proletariat. Indeed, bourgeois leftism, which formerly defined itself through the defence of so-called socialism in such-and-such country or of such-and-such "worker's state" that are now considered as more or less degenerated, today keeps a low profile, and does not dare speaking of socialism in positive terms anymore, and even less of socialist block, but continues to characterize itself through a politically correct anti-capitalism. As we'll analyse further in this text, these leftists, along with the liberal extreme left-wing, today re-baptised as libertarians, attempt to respond to the class contradictions that arise, and more particularly to the currents that among the proletariat express a rupture with the bourgeois society. We shall examine those class contradictions in order to further evaluate and understand these expressions.

## Summits, counter-summits and proletarian struggle

The importance of these summits and anti-summits is probably exaggerated, because for it to function well capital needs neither international conferences nor summit meetings. The keystone of homogeneity in the decision making of capital is essentially rooted in the fact that the dictatorship of the rate of profit exists everywhere, that it is the origin of all decisions, the essence of each economic directive, the reason for capitalism to exist, always and all over the world. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the multinationals and governments, the parliaments and local administrations, the associations of states and consortiums, the trusts and the small enterprises, all apply, whatever the importance of the decision to be taken, the criteria of profitability of capital (their own or the one they administer); and in the same way, within the enterprises, from the highest leader to the last worker, they are all forced to apply these criteria if they want to keep their jobs, and this is independent of the fact that this situation is advantageous to some, whereas it means suffering and the daily alienation from their life for the others. Capital is precisely characterised by its democracy, by its capacity to co-opt those who, among its subjects, will be the most unscrupulous in satisfying its appetite for profit, those who will display the greatest skill at imposing its despotism without mercy, whether they are leaders, governors, international civil servants, local administrators, trade-union chiefs, or torturers. Let us simply remember the workers' leaders who, at all times, were co-opted by the government of capital, from Noske and Walesa to Lula! The other face of this democracy that allows co-opting the workers' leaders to serve capital is the daily despotism that imposes value in process against human life. Omnipotent dictatorship of the rate of profit that, moreover, develops competition between proletarians and leads to the struggle of each against each other, always

13. Cf. the special issue on the social forum of Porto Alegre of the magazine *Hika*, entitled "Another world is possible" (P.K. 871, 48080 Bilbao, Espana or hikadon@telenis.es).

in favour of imposing the greatest possible rate of accumulation.

But beyond the myth existing around the importance of the formal centralism with which capital is endowed, it is clear that capitalism has decisional centres (meetings, institutions, places, organisms, people...) at its disposal, which, whenever needed, centralise some global decisions, obeying this omnipresent dictatorship of the rate of profit. Within these centres are generally announced the measures that attack the standard of living of proletarians; while between the more decisive factions of the bourgeoisie are signing agreements. These summit meetings of capitalistic power are publicly announced in the media, in search of popular support for the leaders of capital and for the measures that emerge from those meetings. And naturally, these meetings also obey to the hazards of negotiations between the different factions of capital, as well as to the necessity to constitute constellations and alliances in an attempt to improve the balance of forces against other factions, as it is the case for the regional common markets. Another purpose of these summits and anti-summits is to make a show about the importance of these bourgeois polarisations, which capital needs to channel any proletarian protest.

Therefore, although the decisional importance of these summits is exaggerated, and even though their spectacularisation and their pseudo protest constitutes a necessity of the reproduction of bourgeois domination, it is normal that the proletariat has always considered them as an attack against its own life, and this, whether these meetings take place in only

one country or whether they gather the bourgeoisie of various ones, whether they are governmental, organised by political parties, trade unions, or whether they originate from the structuring of these forces at an international scale. At any time these summits have always caused great movements of protest, violent demonstrations, street fighting, bomb attacks and intense often-armed confrontations. Against the myth that presents as a new fact the confrontations that break out nowadays almost everywhere in the world at the time of these summits (the manipulation of the public opinion always requires making new stuff from old ones), we could mention many examples that occurred on the five continents and demonstrate the opposite. We need only remember the great street battles of the 60's and 70's, triggered by the proletariat in America against the various international summits organised on this continent, against the meetings of the OAS, of the Alliance for Progress, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the GATT, or against Presidents Conferences... We need only remember the enterprises set on fire, factories and

campuses occupied, the violent demonstrations, bomb attacks against state sites, the strikes, the confrontations with the police, with special repression units, and in many countries, with the army...

Regarding current events, the class confrontations become more and more obvious: Davos, Seattle, Nice, Prague, Gothenburg, Naples, and Genoa...<sup>14</sup> are a manifestation of this. Once more, the proletariat re-emerges exactly where the different factions of international capital meet to decide how they will proceed with the exploitation of the proletarians all over the world. On the one hand stand the official summits and the social democrat anti-summits, the conferences in the official lounges and the carnival-like processions dominated by social democracy, the official pseudo protest. On the other hand the proletariat emerges, outflanking the processions, in an attempt to impose its direct action<sup>15</sup>, smashing shop windows and expropriating everything that can be, attacking official buildings and bourgeois property in general, setting fire to everything that represents the state, and criticising and denouncing aloud, through leaflets, pamphlets and reviews the NGO, *Attac*, parties and trade unions.

As one can see, even in these bourgeois lairs and despite the presence of a lot of recuperation forces, once more both classes of society confront each other; bourgeoisie against proletariat, conservation of the bourgeois social order against its global reconsideration. Right- and left-wing may stage all the protest shows they want, the media can do its best to validate the options of "globalisation" and "anti-globalisation", but inevitably, the critique of capitalism carried by the proletarians leads them to overpower the containment; and then, inevitably, both antagonistic social projects re-emerge: perpetuation of the capitalistic catastrophe or social revolution.

Aside from the discussion that we shall approach further and which develops nowadays within our class about the stance of the proletariat, about its involvement or not in these processions, about the significance of the motto "to stand outside and against conferences and anti-conferences" (which is our position!),



14. The original version of this text has been published in our central review in Spanish, previous to the G8 meeting and the *anti-summit* demonstrations it generated in Genoa. This translation is, however, subsequent. In the last issue of Communism in English, we published a comment on the repression of those demonstrations and reproduced a leaflet from comrades of Precari Nati.

15. Further in the text, the reader will understand why we specify "an attempt to impose its direct action" and not "assuming its direct action".



about the assessment of this direct action (does it correctly express the unification and the development of the international force against capital, or on the contrary does it presuppose a submission to a show that diverts from the real direct action?). Aside then from this discussion, there is no doubt of the fact that these explosions express the rage of our class facing the bourgeois gathered there in order to “decide the fate of the planet”.<sup>16</sup> In this way the process of proletarian autonomisation initiated by our class at the time of the summits and anti-summits is extremely encouraging. It materialises through a rupture with the trade-unionist containment, through important expressions of violence against this latter, against private property, against the different state-controlled structures in place; and all this emphasizes the fact that the real opposition does not stand between Davos and Porto Alegre, between the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and Attac... but, as ever, between capital (right- as well as left-wing) and the proletariat.

Although the autonomy of the proletariat still remains very relative within these struggles, they nevertheless express the class war and therefore, the ever-growing antagonism between humankind and capitalism. These struggles also put back on the agenda within the community of struggle that develops –particularly within the vanguard minorities- some central issues, like proletarian internationalism, the international necessity to get constituted in force, the issue of the international struggle against the power of capital and the world state. Of course, from the social viewpoint, solutions are still far from being found. But the fact that thousands of militants throughout the world reconsider and re-discuss the central issues of social revolution definitely constitutes an encouraging fact. If we add to this the continuity of recurring explosions in different places in the world, we can say that it is an important step for the revolutionary movement.

### Bourgeois channelling, spectacularisation and falsification

It is obvious that the media will never portray things on the basis of the true bourgeoisie/proletariat polarisation. On the contrary, their function is to conceal these class antagonisms and channel them into inter-bourgeois contradictions, and make these spectacular enough to mask the real antagonisms, to turn the world proletariat into a mass of spectators passively witnessing the succession of conferences and counter-conferences, and, for the most active sectors, allows the possibility to applaud or boo the show. Also allowed, (so that it improves the show’s credibility) are yelling, mottos, slogans and even, to a certain extent, certain violent actions as long as they don’t cast doubt on the show or its outlet function. In order to achieve proper falsification of the information, only official conferences and *Attac* and their acolytes are to be taken into consideration, including of course, the more violent expressions of the same discourse generated by most hotheaded supporters of the Tobin tax. For the media, the only opposition that matters is the one opposing summits and anti-summits, as for example Seattle and Porto Alegre, even if, from time to time, they can’t avoid showing some images of rioters and anti-conformists.

However, let us remember that those summits and anti-summits are absolutely not new. During the premise of the so-called First and



Second World Wars, the peace negotiations between superpowers (that, of course, ended up with war), were handled by staging more or less parallel congresses, organized by pacifists and social democrats, and, as today, with the purpose of showing off and duping the proletarians to have them forfeit any inclination towards direct action. For about 15 years now, the rhythm of these spectacles of summit and anti-summit meetings has increased frantically: the Rio meeting on the future of the planet and its parallel anti-meeting, the festivities and counter-festivities commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the America’s “discovery”, conferences on the destruction of the planet resources followed by ecologic anti-conferences all over the world...

The social forum of Porto Alegre of January 2001 is an excellent example of a mediated show staged by capital in order to portray the past, present and future oppositions as a mere inter-bourgeois question. According to the fabricants of *authorized* opinion, the Porto Alegre forum is the true retort to the Davos meeting, and, to provide it with all the “reality” that can come out of such exhibitions (like those “apple” soaps that smell of apple more than an apple itself, the show always seems more real than reality!), they go as far as staging what they’ll call a “*set symbolic of passion*”, based on a live debate “*via teleconference between the cold Davos and the warm Porto Alegre...*”<sup>17</sup>

16. We have made clear that believing that the future of capital may be decided in those kinds of meetings is no more than a myth. However, the bourgeois do need to centralise formally in order to sign treaties, draw perspectives and enforce more standardised economic policies, such as those that characterise the World Bank and the IMF. Actually, the bourgeoisie in every country makes an increasing use of the negotiations and claims of these institutions to justify its own austerity policy. Hence this “natural” proletarian rage against all that, and the fact that in every country, there are confrontations against the delegations of these organisms and the additional measures they wish to enforce.

17. What is written between quotation marks is not a product of our delirious thoughts, but of those generated by the virtual passions of the Porto Alegre protagonists. We have quoted it textually from their press, in particular from the issue the magazine *Hika* dedicated to the World Social Forum, already mentioned in note 13.

*“The Davos team, led by the financier and speculator Georges Soros, is clad in black suits, wears tie and hair grease, and is serious and silent. On Porto Alegre’s side, a broad spectrum of races, colourful clothes, languages, voices... and public. The discussion lasted for forty minutes. Forty minutes, during which hundreds of persons, crammed in front of the television screens, applauded enthusiastically, booed, laughed or yelled slogans. Soros and his team (formed by Mark Malloch, UN consultant, John Ruggie, also UN consultant, and Bjorn Edlud, president of a Swiss multinational corporation), advised by image specialists, endeavoured to maintain an Olympic calm, while claiming to be concerned by poverty and pointing out that well before*

*the current globalisation and external debt, children already died of starvation in Africa. From Porto Alegre, Bernard Cassen (Attac) replied with much precision, demanding the enforcement of the Tobin Tax on financial and speculative operations and the cancellation of the external debt. Rafael Alegria (Via Campesina) enumerated the globalisation’s effects on the disarticulation of the state’s services, on the rise of job losses and the inaccessibility of land ownership for peasants. But passion was unleashed for two magical minutes: Hebe Bonafini<sup>18</sup> from the ‘Mothers of the May Square’ declared with a faltering but firm voice: ‘Sir, you stand against us, your responses are hypocritical. Answer! How many children do you kill a day?’ From Davos, Georges Soros gave the ghost of a smile and remained silent. So Bonafini yelled at him: ‘Mister Soros, you laugh at the deaths of thousands of children?’ In front of the television screens, people in Porto Alegre applauded fervently at the Mother of May. Soros kept his stance, offering his image for a satellite publicity.”*

Such is the work of medias: hide the proletariat and its struggle against the capitalist society behind this show between Soros and the leftists, between the IMF and Attac, between “globalisation” and “anti-globalisation”. Hence another example, during the Nice summit, as accurately stated in an internationally distributed pamphlet: “*The bourgeois press lied. Lied shamelessly. According to it, the demonstrators against capitalist*

*globalisation joined the citizen parade, summoned by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). What more could these capitalists and rulers, these spokesmen and lackeys long for, than seeing the proletarian youth at war with capitalism, joining those misleading processions organized by the legal opposition to the bourgeois system? In reality, in the streets of Nice, two different, opposing, movements were discernible... Two movements that so played their part: the first one, bourgeois (even though it still drags along a good number of proletarians led astray), arrives as reinforcement to the capitalist state, led by reformist leaders at the service of the latter. The second, proletarian, denouncing capitalism ardently and attacking its interests.”<sup>19</sup>*

It appears extremely important to denounce, like many comrades and groups standing against the current, the true opposition between the proletarian movement and all this anti-summits and citizen celebrations, organized by Attac and the like. However, to claim, as below in the leaflet, that these two distinct demonstrations coincide with two different social movements, one reformist and the other anti-capitalist, is to envisage things in an absolute and insufficiently dialectic way. Indeed, despite the obvious differences that distinguish those demonstrations, they both contain the class contradiction. The social democrat one guides the proletarians like docile sheep. The other one (that began 3 hours later), via its

18. Before printing this text, some comrades have expressed their disagreement relative to our critique of Hebe Bonafini, whom they consider as a proletarian, struggling for many years in a particularly difficult struggle, in the opposite direction of the democratic recuperation of a faction of the “Mothers of the May Square”. We shall simply respond that our aim is elsewhere. We want to denounce a counterrevolutionary show and we bitterly lament to see someone as Hebe Bonafini play a part in it. As we mention all through this text, our interest is to appeal to the militants not to make themselves accomplices of social democracy and the contestation show, and to stand outside and against it all. The presence of revolutionary militants such as H. Bonafini is a blessing for these social-democrat pseudo-contestations; it brings a scent of radicalism to the Forum of Porto Alegre and to the anti-globalisation led by Attac and acolytes. The whole history of popular-frontism is marked with such use of revolutionary militants: in 1936, in Spain, the Popular Front, which later would liquidate the revolution, affirmed itself thanks to the presence of militants such as Durrutti, who, against the historic position of revolutionaries, called for voting in favour of the Popular Front.

19. Quotation from a leaflet signed by the Anti-capitalist Revolutionary Movement (Ap. de correos 265, 08080 Barcelona, Spain) that clearly expresses the real opposition between bourgeoisie and proletariat. We note, however, that the term “proletarian youth” instead of proletariat is, according to us, a concession to fashion. In this same document, the reading of issue n°144, third year, of the Barcelona Counter-information Bulletin is also recommended (<http://www.sindominio.net/zitzania>) “for a true information about what happened in Nice”.

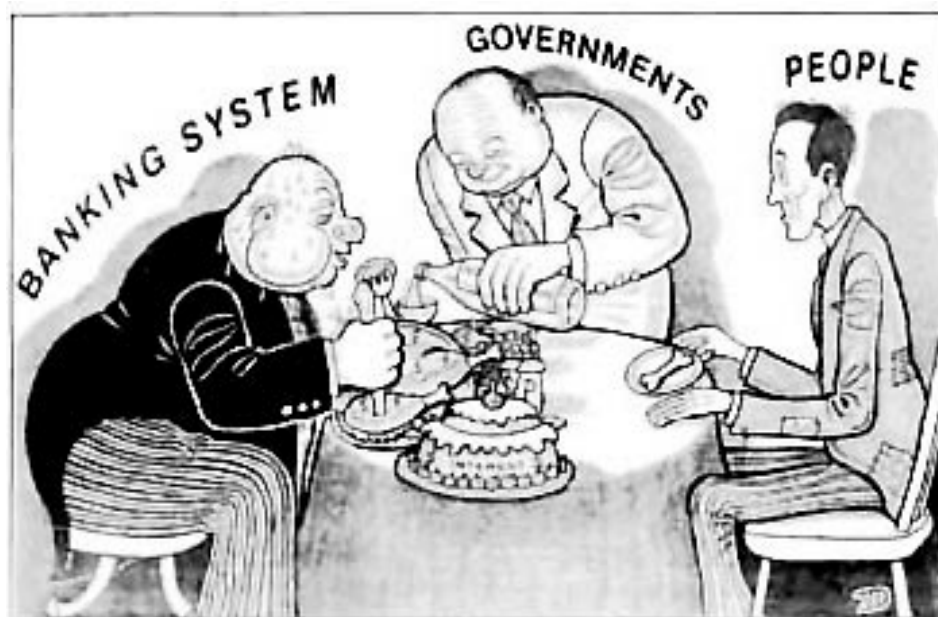




radical mottos, tended towards proletarian rupture, but contained a whole range of centrist positions and ideologies peculiar to social democracy, as we shall see further. All this takes shape, for example, in the belief of the vast majority of demonstrators, that they can confront capitalism without confronting social democracy (constituent of capitalism) at the same time and in the same way, or, despite their capacity to organize themselves *outside* social democracy, in their difficulties to organize *against* it.

### Official or parallel summits fever and falsehood of the alternative bourgeois projects

These last years have seen the trend of summits and anti-summits rise and make a qualitative step forward in simultaneity with the radicalisation of the proletarian protests against them. Nowadays, organizing a summit no longer consists solely of sorting out the general meetings, the commissions, lodgement for those attending the congress or anti-congress, the official celebrations and the democrat citizen ones organised by the “anti-globalisation militants”. It is also necessary to anticipate the proletarian ruptures and outflanking, and, consequently, to provide for specialised repressive forces, prepare the reinforcement of border inspection, concentration of shock troops, filming and broadcasting teams, specific services like bodyguards for the congress or anti-congress personalities, troop transport vehicles, tanks, anti-demonstration fences, and settling of the secret services from all around the world. It also requires planning access or evacuation procedures for the congress protagonists, in case the attacks would reach the official centres, and the extraordinary mobilisation of medical services for the wounded, as well as gathering weapons and gasses, and getting the confinement cells and detention centres ready to welcome a large number of prisoners. As an example, on the occasion of the IMF and World Bank congress of Prague, no less than 170 policemen and 123 demonstrators were wounded, around 900 persons were arrested, while damage inflicted on



private property amounted a million dollars, which is after all fairly insignificant compared to the real cost of these little meetings, which is said to include even potential airborne evacuation of the main personalities as well as air and anti-missile coverage of the zone.<sup>20</sup> Of course, all this information (along with the inevitable distortions and falsifications) echoed all over the world, giving the impression that we were indeed witnessing an historic conflict of exceptional intensity, which for some is a battle between the supporters of globalisation and the anti-globalisation ones, while some others see it as a sort of capitalism versus anti-capitalism, international capital versus international revolution conflict.

Despite these clashes actually being a part of the all-time confrontation between the preservation of the private property's world and the proletarian struggle for social revolution:

- to imagine that a balance of forces is presently being enforced that would impede the development of capital's current international policy, is to be deeply unaware of capitalism own functioning;
- to imagine that it truly is a confrontation between two different projects (neo-liberalism versus anti-neo-liberalism, globalisation versus anti-globalisation) and that the bourgeois left-wing really has a distinct capitalist project, also proves a total ignorance of the very essence of the bourgeois social formation and a total

misunderstanding of these capitalist factions conglomerate's function;

- and finally, to believe that, thanks to “direct action”, the proletariat has at last found the path of proletarian internationalism, or as alleged by some groups, that through these actions we are entering a phase of direct confrontation between capitalist internationalism and proletarian internationalism, not only evidences unawareness of capitalism's functioning, but comes to forget, deform, falsify the revolution's program, the revolutionary strategy, and inevitably leads to favouring confusion, by assuming a centrist role (attempting to prevent the necessary rupture) within the proletarian movement.

Let us now provide some explanations about the two first points. The last one is a matter of the proletariat's own development and revolutionary affirmation, and we shall bring it up in the following chapters.

The international policy, nowadays called neo-liberal or “globalisation”, does not have a long-term viable bourgeois alternative. This policy obeys to the intrinsic rules of the system that has been global ever since it has existed and that bases

20. According to an estimation published during the Washington summit, expenses related to security amounted to 32 millions dollars. We have no idea what is included in such sum and even less so of what it conceals, for security reasons.

its functioning on the famous market's "invisible hand", namely the rule of value. Contrarily to what is sometimes heard, this is not "one" of capital's policies, this is capitalism's "natural" implementation, and this is the rule that will ultimately impose itself. The different so-called "alternative" economic policies can only, very partially and in a limited way in time and/or space, correct or reduce its enforcement. Populists (from Getulio Vargas to Peron, from Cardenas to Nasser), the so-called socialist countries, but also fascism, Nazism, Francoism... were its most durable expressions. These historic attempts to affirm a different capitalist project on the long term (by restricting the law of value's application on account of protectionism) could only have had limited duration, beyond which failure was inevitable.

For those same reasons it is not possible to render "more human" a system that is not. In the same way, there can be no environment-friendly capitalism, or capitalism without wars. Whatever happened to the bourgeois "ecologic" surge of awareness, for example, it did little to protect nature from the mischief of capitalist's production; on the contrary, it turned the "ecologic" and "natural" into commodity. The constant search for maximum profitability and the enterprises' impressive adaptation abilities, ready to sell basically anything under the ecologic label, make the capitalist dictatorship on nature even harsher, and pose a threat for all species, and the human one in particular. In the same way, it is absolutely impossible to pacify the capitalist world, as the whole of the pacifist capitalist policies only use peace as a war implement.

Hiding this reality is more and more difficult. Capital's catastrophe has reached such proportions that the room for manoeuvre, that not so long ago allowed implementing somewhat dissimilar economic policies, has shrunk: capitalism nowadays tends irreversibly and globally to unify its



policies; both left-wing and right-wing make it clearer everyday, that there is only one possible capitalist policy (and that's what all leftists who accessed power now persistently avow!). Thus, insofar as they have been co-opted to take part in the decisions, the "anti-neo-liberals" and "anti-globalists" from the opposition inevitably turn into "neo-liberals" and "pro-globalisation" and are compelled to enforce the very opposite of what they had been defending until then. Still, we cannot consider this is an expression of their free will, or simply that they are just a bunch of cynical liars, because it is indeed true that capitalism compels them to implement its own policy in a much stronger way than these leftists had imagined.

Along with capital's expansion, the ability to moderate, at a regional level, the international law of value's enforcement has dwindled in time and space. Ultra-protectionist capitalism, like the one that reigned during numerous years in Russia, China, and Albania... is inconceivable nowadays. The days of the Cuban capitalist regime and Castroist reactionary leaders are now numbered. Stalinism, the ultra-reactionary model of capitalist development (it seals its borders as an attempt to oppose the progress of the productive forces' development, international capital's natural tendency, the law of value), was not eradicated by democratic ideas or because of its ruthless use of concentration camps (capitalism

always made use of them), but merely because the strict implementation of the law of value cannot be indefinitely withheld. Indeed, the wider the gap between, on one side, productive force's worldwide development and the ensuing international devalorisation, and on the other, the protectionist restriction of that devalorisation in a given productive area, the faster the catastrophe and socio-economic implosion of that area will occur (cf. what happened in Eastern Europe).

This process has been accelerating with the development of capital's contradictions, and it is more and more difficult to maintain, through subsidization, the viability of certain productive areas and economic activity sectors. From the local governments' point of view, whose mission is to offer the best rate of profit in order to attract capital (a policy always in accordance with the international credit organisms and particularly the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), it means not only to increase the exploitation rate as much as possible, but also to avoid taxing lucrative sectors to finance non-lucrative sectors (redistribution of profit). This process explains the tendency towards homogeneousness of the wide-scale bourgeois policy. So, if bourgeois politicians still deliver somewhat distinct speeches (and even then, less and less!), when it comes to governing, they all implement, with a few variations, the International Monetary Fund's policy. This is one of the reasons for the so-called "betrayal" of leftists who accessed government and in conclusion enforce a "right-wing policy", or ecologists who finally end up supporting the national and international war effort (NATO's included), and, more globally, the destruction of the planet and human life. If they implement a "right-wing" policy, it's because, from capital's point of view, it's the only valid one<sup>21</sup>: it is necessary to generate profit and attract capital on the basis of that profitability. If some differences in the speeches still remain, it is not as a reflection of true differences between economic policies, but rather because on certain occasions, facing the proletariat, only in the name of left-wing or ecology can austerity measures be enforced.

21. The regime of Saddam Hussein, in Iraq, or Chavez, in Venezuela may represent different nuances in this general policy, but it is in no way comparable to a generalized, anchored in time phenomenon, like Stalinism was.



That's why, even from the capitalist's point of view, nothing else is to be expected from this conglomerate of factions, which, in their speeches, blame the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These bourgeois factions only differ in the manner they intend to channel the proletarians who, under unceasing attack by the progresses of capitalism, grow a sort of nostalgia for a "less aggressive and less destructive" world, forever gone.<sup>22</sup> This idiotic nostalgia induces the naïve desire to protect local production, relieved from the domination of these gigantic international enterprises, which, without scruples, destroy everything in the name of capital. It is no project but the typical helpless lamentation of local and "more ecologic" management. A leaflet, from the Spanish CNT of Barcelona, dated from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2000, was concluded precisely on this motto, perfect expression of the ideological, utopian and reactionary claims of this bundle of "anti-globalist" bourgeois factions: "*Support to local, ecologic and self-ruled economy*".

Furthermore, it is obvious that the development of these pseudo-projects constitutes the ideological expression of various bourgeois factions' protectionist interests, particular and localist ones, which, as such, promote the imperialistic struggle (and wars). Therefore, it is not a matter, despite the content of their speeches, of achieving a "more human capitalism" – capitalism is and has always been inhuman and the antagonism between capitalism and humanity can only grow worse-, it is all about containing the proletariat with these reactionary utopias and exhorting it to the defence of their local, regional, national interests... No wonder then, that in many countries, the extreme right wing declares itself in favour of the "anti-globalisation". Its real intent is, of course, to regain credibility in the eyes of the exploited and channel the growing proletarian rage towards the way things are going on around the planet into the grounds of the inter-bourgeois struggle, of the imperialistic war.

### Role of the proletariat in the circus of summits and its drifts: question of the proletarian autonomy

This whole show of summits and anti-summits aims to present the protests of Davos, Seattle, Prague, and Genoa... as the real alternative to the present world. Even outside the overtly social democrat factions, it is of good taste to consider these days when summits, street battles... take place, as the very essence of the struggle, found at last, that would oppose the present development of capitalism, as the quintessence of proletarian internationalism. In this chapter we will therefore focus on the role currently assigned to the action of the proletariat within these summits, with the aim to specify our interests and to define the proletarian policy to adopt facing this big circus.

In order to go deeper into this question, it is essential to analyse the issue of the difference existing between the way the struggle of our class expresses itself against the summits and anti-summits, and the proletarian struggles that, as we said, are currently characterised by abrupt qualitative leaps (although sporadic and without continuity), by extremely violent struggles that attack the whole political spectrum and that develop out of any mediation, as it happened these last years in Romania, Venezuela, Albania, Algeria... or more recently, in Indonesia, Ecuador... It is necessary to analyse the issue of



the existing interaction between each of these struggles, proletarian ways of expression.

As an example, and to make the global understanding easier, let's compare the struggles that took place in Seattle, with those that occurred, in early 2000, in Ecuador. In both cases entire factions of the proletariat confronted capital, thousands of proletarians opposed the different national and international structures of the world capitalistic state. In both cases they confronted the repressive corps that protect private property, as well as capital's decisional centres. In both cases they fought the local leaders as well as the international leaders of capital.

Let's now proceed while insisting on the differences.<sup>23</sup> Although we make

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22. The capitalist catastrophe is going deeper. To invert the wheel of history is a reactionary utopia. Only the destruction of capital will open the way for humanity to build another world, which will have nothing to do with capitalism, as we knew it a few dozens of years ago.

23. We have no interest in separating these movements. What we want is to insist on the one and only content of the proletarian movement and on the necessity of its revolutionary centralisation. However, it is a fact that this distinction and separation currently does exist, and that, in both our examples, the protagonists themselves are not aware than it is one and the same movement. This has led us to emphasize the differences, to bring the present tendencies to their most extreme expressions (to the point of depicting the differences as much more clearly distinct than they are in reality), in order to analyse them. Indeed, analysing the most extreme differences allows a development of a precise comradely criticism for everyone of these expressions, and at the same time, puts forward that we are dealing with one and the same movement. The following caricature allows an understanding of our methodology: let's consider that the movement in Ecuador originates in economic misery, and the one in Seattle in political awareness, it appears obviously that this distinction is a caricature, nevertheless it may help us to clarify the actions specific to each movement, and to understand, or better, to assume, as we state at the end of the text, that we're dealing with the one and the same social movement aiming at the abolition of capital. If we were to solely insist on the fact that the struggle is part of the same movement, and that within it everything is equal, which is ultimately true, it would be impossible to formulate any explanation based on a comparison, as we do here.

this comparison in order to oppose some subtler conceptions, we'll start by emphasizing the most stupid and short-sighted prejudices derived from the social democrat ideology. According to the vision of Attac and Co, the struggles in each country cannot go further because the decisional centres of capital, or better said of financial capital, are the World Bank and the IMF, and it is at the time of summit meetings that these institutions decide the fate of the planet. Attac and Co do not therefore recognise that the proletarian movement is the same in Seattle as it is in Ecuador. But even if they would accept this idea they would pretend that in Seattle the movement is international and decisive, whereas in Ecuador it is local, indigenous, economicist and without great impact. In essence, they would state that it is thanks to the protests in Seattle, Davos, and Washington... that attack

the centre of the system that capitalism faces difficulties in imposing the measures, recommended by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

We counter this by insisting that in Ecuador proletarians confronted not only the local bourgeoisie, but also the international bourgeoisie. Through its action the proletariat opposed the austerity plans sponsored by these famous institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The generalisation of this movement would have allowed to impose an international balance of forces which would have called into question any increase in the rate of exploitation; its qualitative development would have called into question the exploitation itself. Contrary to this the only thing that the proletarian movement fighting against the summits and anti-summits, against the plans of the IMF, etc. can be

Bolivia where the measures about the running water that national and international capital wanted to impose have since been withdrawn).

On the other hand, the action in Seattle, although more general and certainly more spectacular, is nevertheless incapable of imposing a balance of forces allowing, for example, a prevention of an increase of the rate of exploitation.

The adjournment of the meeting of the World Bank in Barcelona, planned for June 2001, incited our enemies to call it a triumph. As far as we are concerned, we consider that even if one succeeds in eliminating all the conferences from the surface of the earth, even if one destroys the whole of the buildings housing the meetings of these international organisms, one would not succeed in preventing the implementation of the measures, country by country. It is necessary to clearly affirm it in order to refute the opposing myth. This does not at all depreciate the struggle of the proletarians against the summits and anti-summits, struggles that inspire a real panic to the delegates attending these congresses, the cops, the governments and the social democrats. As we will see later, these sectors of the proletariat could play a decisive role in the generalisation of the struggle, in the consciousness and the international direction of the movement.

Let's therefore proceed with our comparison. In Ecuador this movement is the result of a set of partial struggles, led by different sectors of the proletariat in order to defend their interests against "their own" bourgeoisie, "their own" trade unionists, "their own" social democrat parties... In the beginning the requirements were different, then the discontent grew and spread. The proletarian struggle occupied the street and the particular demands became generalised.<sup>24</sup> Decisional centres of the state (parliament, judicial power, presidency, places of meetings for political parties...) were attacked.

In Seattle, the movement was composed of those who want to attack what they consider to be the decisional centres of capital and the world state. And this is true for the proletarians who walk like good little sheep in social democrat processions as well as for those who outflank them and who will con-

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24. Social democracy, Marxism-Leninism, anarcho-syndicalism, mention the shift from the economic field to the political field, or the transformation of immediate struggles into historic struggles, as if they had a different nature. They link this change to the contribution of political awareness, or to the political action of the party. As far as we are concerned, we refuse this distinction (see our *Thesis of programmatic orientation*, ICG, n°15, 31, 32 and 33); we rather refer to a generalization of the immediate claims. The class contradictions contain in themselves their own generalisation, which means that any struggle against the concrete exploitation conditions, against the bourgeois austerity measures (increase of surplus value's rate), even if it is geographically limited, contains in itself the struggle against this exploitation society as a whole. What determines the shift towards generalisation is not the political action of the vanguard elements, but, on the contrary, the development of the proletariat's interests that no particular struggle can bring to victory, no particular claim can fulfil. It tends, inclusively against the intervention of political activists, to generalise itself into a struggle against capital and the state. Generally, as we mentioned in thesis n°15, the qualitative leap takes shape by overriding the organizations that express partial claims (workers organizations, classist associations, factory committees...) and by shifting to territorial organizations in which all proletarians gather –men and women, workers and unemployed, young and old-, such as workers' councils, supply committees, assemblies from one or more cities...



expected to achieve is that these meetings do not take place, that the delegates to these congresses, or more generally the representatives of world capitalism, are hindered by terror. But it will not prevent decisions being taken. This will be done discreetly, without fanfare, in secret alcoves or through "confidential" inter-bourgeois contacts... But one way or another, the decisions will be taken!

Although the actions such as the ones that took place in Ecuador, are geographically limited, they are capable (a large number of historic examples is testament to this) of imposing an international balance of forces against capital, to freeze the measures attacking the proletariat (as in



front social democracy, getting organised outside it, and often even against it. The starting point of the proletarians who went to Seattle is apparently more global, more politicised<sup>25</sup> and more determined by the political will than by the immediate interest, the social interest. They start from their positions, from their revolutionary ideas, even though these are, in turn, the result of the consciousness of the generalised immediate interests of the proletariat.

Through its opposition to the expressions of capital and the state, the movement in Ecuador, social product of the proletarian interests becoming widespread, directly contains, represents and assumes the interests of the international proletariat against capital and the world state. The consequent struggle for their interests led the proletarians to practically oppose the attempts of social democrat containment, despite what the protagonists might think. In Ecuador the proletarian movement,

whose interests emerged and developed with this movement, was urged to break away from any of social democrat containment. In Seattle, on the contrary, only the political positions and the programmatic clarity allow to develop and to deepen the break from social democracy.

In Ecuador the proletariat was only able to defend the interests for which the movement started, if it breaks away from the social democrat containment and assumes its class autonomy. When it decided to go to Quito, considered to be a decisional centre of capital, it's because it can't stand it any longer, because it wanted to get rid of those who starve it. It was an attack! Because everybody advised to

stay quiet and "to go back home". Nobody invited these proletarians to Quito, and there is neither a summit, nor an anti-summit to "welcome" them. Only the police will be there and will first do its best to prevent them from reaching capital city. And in spite of this the proletariat will impose its determination. The trade union containment and the bourgeois left will try to jump on the bandwagon, but they'll only just manage to follow it.



On the other hand, in Seattle, the summits triggered the movement. The places and dates of the gathering are determined according to the summits. This was not a proletarian force, which decided to go to Seattle; proletarians were invited to participate like a submissive herd in processions whose planning is based on the meetings' schedule. Besides these processions, and to a certain extent outside and against them, there were groups of proletarians ready to fight against this containment. Of course, these groups were not invited... and they were rather feared. It was against them that the repressive forces were organised. It was because of them that the checking at the borders

was reinforced. These proletarian factions ready to fight this framework went to Seattle for their programmatical positions. They were going there to mark and develop their refusal of capital as a whole. Only the perception of the interests of the international proletariat, transformed into class-consciousness and into positions (filtered by the bourgeois ideology, in spite of a struggle against it), would allow them to oppose social democracy

and to develop the proletarian autonomy. Moreover, the majority of the proletarians who went to Seattle in order to develop the proletarian struggle belonged to an organisation, a network (very fashionable expression nowadays), a movement, a group or were considered as part of their organised periphery.

This makes a considerable distinction between both examples. In Ecuador the breaking was determined by the unavoidable development of antagonistic interests. In Seattle it depended almost exclusively on the

programs and flags of the groups present. This determined that, during events such as Seattle, the political discussion with the groups and the participating organisations acquired great importance. In the same way, the programmatical critique

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25. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Marx already criticised the consideration that a movement is more global if it is more political, hence emphasising the revolutionary political will. Marx demonstrated on the contrary that the proletarian rebellion, even if only unfolding within one region, contains in itself the totality. With regard to this discussion with Ruge, read: *Critical notes on the article "The king of Prussia and the social reform. By a Prussian"*, Karl Marx.

of the organisations which pretended to develop and urge a proletarian rupture became decisive as well as the denunciation of all centrist ideologies that prevented the rupture and/or that wanted to push forward the proletariat while giving a more violent character to the protest of the bourgeois left in the name of the limits of the proletarian consciousness. As we will see later, the fact of giving the bourgeois left wing a more violent character cannot constitute on any account the action program of the proletariat.

The comradely critique we have for these expressions is part and parcel of the rupture movement that is currently developing, whether it is in Seattle, in Ecuador or anywhere else in the world. Despite the differences we emphasised in this or that case, it is still one and the same movement, whose practice we assume. This is our movement,... our world fight against capital. But when from the inside we try to make a critical balance sheet of the strengths and weaknesses of a movement like the one in Ecuador, we feel that its important aspect lies in its practical dynamics and not in the analysis of the flags, groups and positions, which we consider in this case as being secondary. On the other hand, in Seattle, as the political positions were the starting point for this gathering of forces, their analysis and their critique must be taken into consideration without forgetting that, there too, the autonomous struggle of the

international proletariat is at stake, against the bourgeois society and all the recycling proposed by the left wing. In the following chapters we shall analyse how, during these summits, the struggle for the autonomy of the proletariat tries to take shape and we shall give priority to the political positions of the protagonists over their autonomy in every street demonstration.

However, before starting this analysis, it seems imperative to specify that the autonomy in the street is extremely important, and this is why the motto "outside and against the summits and anti-summits" as well as the critique of proletarians marching like good little sheep is fundamental. The Internationalist Communist Group, through several leaflets and propaganda actions, clearly expressed this position during these struggles.

It is just as fundamental (and we endorse this as we can) to criticise the practice of the radical columns of these demonstrations, in order to urge them not to participate in these social democrat processions anymore, even to "outflank the demonstration" or to "radicalise it". Seeing that in such circumstances the proletarian rupture can only take place through the programmatic rupture, through the programmatic and organisative advance of the most radical factions, we are now going to focus on the programmatic positions expressed at the time of these demonstrations.

## Class violence: revolutionaries or activists and opportunists?

Let's now consider in depth the ground of the classist rupture. Let's leave the bleating sheep and concentrate on the radical proletarian fringes we are interested in, on the closest militants or groups of militants, those who go to these demonstrations to confront capital and the state, those who consider that it is decisive to attack social democracy, those who say they are revolutionaries and are present there to develop the revolutionary struggle.

It is clear that to consider oneself as revolutionary expresses a real qualitative leap: it means to assume in a voluntary, organised and conscious way an activity aimed at the destruction of capitalism and the state. We have to point out, in order to reiterate the previous comparison, that when the movement in Ecuador decreases, there remains, in the best case only a few small cores of revolutionary militants who try to draw the lessons and to establish contact with other revolutionaries throughout the world. In Seattle on the contrary, minorities already exist, organised in a permanent way and that will give continuity to their organisation independently of the summits, and this constitutes an extremely important affirmation of the tendency of the proletariat to get organised as a force and as a historic affirmation of the revolutionary militancy. We are part of this process and within this it seems essential to us to practice the comrade critique.

One doesn't become revolutionary by a single act of will, but according to his social practice, the practical role he plays, what he defends in practice. This is valid for militants as well as for the political organisations. It is the social practice, the real social project that positions a group, a militant, on one side or the other of the barricade.

History is full of examples of organisations that on behalf of revolution defended counter-revolution, of national and international political structures that on behalf of socialism, communism and/or anarchism defended precisely the opposite: capitalism





and its state. At the root of all opportunisms, of all renunciations of the program of revolution, one always finds, as a decisive factor of the treason, the ideology of the “lesser evil”, the “realistic” politics, “we don’t have to fright the proletariat with radical propositions”, “the masses would not understand”, the need to proceed “step by step”, the dissolution of the revolutionary program “to go where the masses are”, and finally, the replacement of the communist program by a set of partial reforms or bridge-programs that always lead to the defence of capital. In order to prevail, the counter-revolution always uses the same artifices, and these are not very numerous. This is why it is important to analyse the struggles of the past and to draw lessons from them.

Within the organisations and groups present in Davos, Seattle, Prague... in the pamphlets, leaflets and publications as well as in the discussions, what we see in the first place is that, for those who pretend to be revolutionaries, the main unifying and demarcating element is to assume and claim class violence, and naturally, organised violence of the class minorities.<sup>26</sup> Against the ideology of “non-violence”, so widespread in the official processions and that eases the cops’ job since it allows the police to put on file, to gas, to humiliate and beat up thousands of human beings without triggering any reaction from their part, it is logical and very important that groups that claim revolution assume and exhort to revolutionary violence. It is an invariant necessity, a basic element of the rupture with the social democrat ideology and, at an international level, an objective affirmation of the proletarian tendency to break up with theoreticism and lounge lizard ideologists.

Socially assuming violence, as an elementary phenomenon, as an indispensable human necessity against the society of capital, reappears on the agenda in all of the proletariat movements. It is obvious that international awareness of the necessity of class minority violence against the social democrat pacifist ideology is rising. This awareness is and will be decisive for the structuring of the proletariat as a worldwide force. This present tendency is determined by the exacerbation of all the contradictions of capital, and also by the action and the denunciation that we have put forward

for decades like so many other revolutionary minorities. We emphasize this because it is a strong point of the movement and its vanguard expressions present in Seattle, in Ecuador, in Paris, in Moscow...

Today like yesterday, any group or organisation that is opposed to the proletarian minorities’ violence while putting forward ant substitutionism, antiterrorism, the mythical “class violence as a whole”, belongs in fact to social democracy and to the bourgeois state.

However, violence alone cannot be considered as a sufficient element of a rupture. Considered separately, in itself, it does not allow a setting up of a demarcation line between reform and revolution, as the bourgeois left wing tries to make us believe. Between reform (that also uses violence to defend the system) and revolution, there is a class abyss concerning social project and program. The proletariat has to practically organise itself outside and against social democracy, and delimitate as clearly as possible the opposing sides. The practical affirmation of the proletariat as an independent class simultaneously implies a theoretical definition of methods and objectives clearly demarcating from the bourgeois forces. To believe that this demarcation can exclusively occur on the basis of opposition between violence and non-violence, is absolutely insufficient and leads to confusion.

However, within the movement against the summits, there is a great disregard for the revolutionary theory, for the program of the destruction of capitalism, for the struggle in favour of precise programmatical agreements, for the question of the party and the question of power. Thus, in the shade of social democracy and as violent expression of its being, an ideology has grown that denies or minimises the importance of these issues on behalf of freedom or “libertarian mood”, of “direct action” and “revolutionary practice”. This conception is based on “activity”, “the practicality”, and unity coming through “the struggles in the street”. We mercilessly



criticise this conception because it always leads to opportunism.

Firstly, denying the importance of revolutionary theory and programmatical discussion obviously constitutes a very precise “revolutionary” theory, even if its supporters deny this. The refusal to define the revolutionary program of the proletariat, combined with the apology of “direct action” in the immediate activity and “libertarianism” in the political sphere, is a very concrete program and is nothing new. Opportunists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, starting with Bernstein himself, already based their concept on this maxim: “the final goal is nothing, the movement is everything”.

Even worse, this movementism, this empiricism feels confident and strong because it is capable of leading masses to action, without frightening them with positions such as the necessary dictatorship of the proletariat for the abolition of wage labour. However, from the point of view of the

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26. Whether they are aware of it or not, proletarians who assume and profess the minority violent action break away from democracy, even if it is called “workers’ democracy”. They assume the fact that the revolutionary action has nothing in common with democratic referendums and congresses. They assume that the proletariat can only constitute itself as a force by coordinating and centralising the different expressions that implement, without previous consultation, the different revolutionary tasks. It’s through this process, this affirmation of the community of struggle and interest, that the proletariat reconstitutes itself as a class, and, consequently, gets organised as a party opposed to all existing parties.

## Bourgeois attempts...

proletariat, this lack of direction, of program and perspective, of permanent organisation and this failure to assume the necessity to get centralised, constitutes a great historic weakness allowing, once more, our manipulation. From the point of view of the groups that support and urge this empiric and antiprogrammatical practice, it's an open door to opportunism, frontism, to the ideology of the lesser evil, and in general, to falling into social democracy, on the grounds of the counter-revolution.

Considering the current characteristics of the proletarian struggles around the world, what the movement is precisely lacking is perspective, continuity, revolutionary direction, insurrectionary preparation, which means affirmation of a force aware of where it is heading to, that fights to acquire a centralisation and a direction. The proletariat affirms itself as a class only when it violently and abruptly reappears in the struggle, a fact that today is geographically very limited. At the present time, this is the great weakness of our class: it is incapable of recognising itself in the struggles that occur at the other end of the planet. It is as if, every time, the movement starts from scratch again, without having accumulated any historical experience. To not consider itself as a world class, to not recognise its own past, generates the inability to affirm (and, worse still, to be aware of) the program of the destruction of capitalism. For that reason the libertar-

ian, practicist, movementist... ideologies, which all together oppose "direct action" to the revolutionary program, are today more harmful than ever. They have taken up the role of the opportunists of the past: to prevent the revolutionary rupture with social democracy.

The fact that these groups and organisations consider themselves as revolutionary is not enough to rank them among the revolutionaries. Indeed, their real practice consists precisely in defending this empirical ideology, this revolutionary anti-theory that always marches hand in hand with the activist practice.

The majority of these militants who pretend to be revolutionaries consider that

capitalism thanks to the generalisation of activism (some go as far as associating victory with the number of busses bringing activists to the next summit), clearly indicates an ignorance and an objective contempt not only for the historical movement to which these groups belong, but especially regarding the existing relation between the struggles they lead and other present or past proletarian struggles, that is to say regarding the revolutionary program. Activism thus closes its eyes to the historic arch of the communist struggle against capital; it defends "activity" against revolutionary theory, "direct action" against the necessity to get organised as a political force, a revolutionary party, a centralised force for



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27. There is a critique of this ideology and the form it takes today in the text "Give up activism" published in English, in "Reflections on June 18. Contribution on the politics behind the events that occurred in the city of London on June 18, 1999", Edit. Collective, October 1999. This text gathers several interesting contributions, yet we point out two things. First, the ideological and intellectual conception of the authors. They do not analyse activism either as part of the social practice of the international proletariat, of its strengths or weaknesses (and thus of the balance of forces against capital), nor as an objective product of the movement. They consider it as the exclusive subjective product of the "activists". We also point out the absence of any revolutionary counter-proposition, of any claim of the specific revolutionary activity that since ever characterised the most decided factions of the proletariat, that is to say the revolutionary internationalist activity.

the central activity of the revolution consists in agitating, activating, arousing the struggle of the proletariat, leading permanent campaigns against such or such multinational or institution of capital and of course against the bourgeois summits. We don't criticise the fact that these activists consider themselves as revolution professionals, that they get organised and try with all their heart to develop the revolution; we criticise the fact that, according to them, revolution would result, not from the historic struggles of a social class, but from the generalisation of their actions, from this activism.<sup>27</sup> This ideology based on the specificity of the agitation action, of the recruitment in its favour and on the illusion of the capacity to destroy

the abolition of capitalistic social order. Even when it refers to organisation, activism never considers constituting itself as a worldwide force, developing permanency and centralisation: the worldwide party. It refers on the contrary to informal networks, to unity through action, to agreements on such campaigns. While repeating the old social democrat separation between practice and theory, while depreciating theory and pretending to act on behalf of the masses, of the will of those who struggle, of workers' democracy... activism always leads to the degeneration of political groups. These worshippers of immediatism end up running behind the masses and sacrificing the essence of the revolutionary program.

## Revolutionary International? Activist lie!

Activism originates in the concept according to which the revolutionary International constitutes itself on the basis of immediate action. Nowadays, several groups that question the classic social democrat positions participate in the circus of summits and anti-summits, in their propaganda; they assert it is about a confrontation between the capitalist International and the revolutionary International. As an example the international secretary of the FSA-IWA has no hesitation in titling his document about Prague: "The Capitalist International against the Anarcho-Syndicalist International".



In spite of the power of certain confrontations of our class against the summits and anti-summits, in spite of the violence of outflanking movements and confrontations against the police, in spite of the broken shop windows, etc. it is totally inadequate to refer to this as a revolutionary International. A revolutionary International is much more than all this, not only in quantitative terms related to the expressions of violence, but also in qualitative terms. To glorify these proletarian actions and to identify them with a revolutionary International constitutes a gross distortion of facts and brings forth a completely false picture of what a revolutionary International must be, and this, for different reasons.

The first is that the degree of autonomy of the proletariat remains very relative. Above all because the proletariat does not determine the places, dates and conditions of the confrontations; they are imposed on it by the class enemy<sup>28</sup> and settled at the time of the summits and/or the parallel summits. And even if trying to prevent their realisation or demonstrating against them is a part of the protest, one cannot speak about autonomy of action if one is entirely dependant on these summits to appear and demonstrate.

And indeed, several groups and militants draw the following lessons from Seattle: "it is not necessary to throw oneself into the lion's jaws", "it is our decision of where, when and how we will demonstrate".<sup>29</sup>

Becoming aware of this reality constitutes one of the strongest aspects, developed by the minorities that urge violent action, and several organisations and groups state the necessity to get organised apart from the circus of the summits and anti-summits. Different associations, networks and assemblies begin to claim this objective, shaping thus the embryo of a community of struggle that could be decisive in the future and could foreshadow through its practice, the direction the proletariat needs.

However, and it is necessary to affirm this very clearly, at the time of these summits, even though class violence develops, the degree of autonomy of the proletariat remains weak, extremely weak. This is of

great relief for the cops in their work of preparation and knowledge of the ground in case of "combat" as well as in order to set up cameras, to film, to put on file and to identify "the more dangerous elements".

The bourgeoisie has already achieved important successes at the time of such operations. We have to note the excellent division of work that has been achieved, in order to channel, to scatter and to repress the proletariat: a maximum of people are invited, numbed by sheep-like strolls behind the inevitable pacifist groups; and it is made sure that the "nasty" ones are channelled into processions apart from the main stream or under different colours, with the declared objective to express themselves through violence and to smash shop windows, obviously making the police's action easier. Sleep therapy for the great majority, truncheons and filings for those who look for confrontation, this is how our enemies work in order to divide the proletariat. This is like filtering the movement, selecting and identifying perfectly those to be put on file, and those to be arrested.

The predominant ideology in a large number of these activist groups makes this division of work easier. The fact that they don't define themselves outside and against the official processions of protests and that large numbers agree to form other columns within these same processions is a contribution towards the state's action. Moreover, in some cases, those who take the head of the outflanking actions are none other than the "youth sections" of leftist groups or factions

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28. One could retort that the exploited class always acts according to the dominant class determinations, that capital is the subject of this society and that the proletariat can only arise as a negation. It is true, but in this precise case, it is not a matter of a spontaneous and generalised reaction of the proletariat facing a bourgeois attack. Even if it determines the proletariat action by its aggression, the bourgeoisie cannot predict how it will react, neither what moment it will choose to react, nor what kind of action it will put into practice. In the case of the summits and anti-summits, it's the opposite; the action of the proletariat is completely determined and publicly known in advance.

29. Quotations from pamphlets, conversations and letters from comrades.



## Bourgeois attempts...

of social democracy (Maoist, Trotskyites, guerrilleros...) who obviously do not stand against social democracy, against the propositions aiming to humanise capitalism, but through their so-called “radical” actions (spectacular, in fact) actually give a greater credibility to social democracy.<sup>30</sup>

Things would be different if the most determined sectors of the proletariat acted to prevent this division of work, if they

rejected the separation between those who parade gently and the “hooligans”, if they organised violence in order to fight processions and official protests and to bring thus the whole of the proletarians to violently protest and confront not only the official police, but also the trade-union and left wing cops who, in collaboration with the first, guarantee the division of work and state terrorism.



30. For the majority of these groups (in reality merely pseudo-radicals) that use the term in an immediate and erroneous sense, “radical” means giving a violent character to the social democrat procession, outflanking the *Attac* celebrations through “direct action” (see farther the critic of the use of the term “direct action”), which in fact contradicts the only policy the proletariat is interested in, that is to say standing outside and against these counterrevolutionary demonstrations. For us, to-radicalise means fighting to destroy the very roots of the bourgeois society, its foundations, its values, wage labour... all these “little programmatic details” that are never mentioned by any of these groups.

31. And this is one of the major problems of the proletariat. Social democracy should not be criticised for its deviations, but because it is a part of capital; its pacifism should not be denounced, but confronted through revolutionary violence, because that pacifism is merely an ideological element that makes it easier to inflict upon us its counterrevolutionary violence (let us remember that social democracy always resorts to violence against the revolution!).

One may retort that the balance of forces is not in our favour to face the left wing bourgeoisie, that shock troops of the left wing and the trade-union cops still guarantee the peaceful order in their demonstrations, but these affirmations do nothing but confirm the lack of autonomy we referred to above.

This shows that the ideology dominant in this milieu is the one of the lesser evil; it shows that, because of this ideology, the organisation of the proletarian violence never overtly expresses itself against social democracy and the anti-summits but always against the right wing and the official summits; it shows that, because of this ideology, the organisation of the proletarian violence forms itself on the social democratic grounds (as if the proletariat could conquer its autonomy in such way!) and that it breaks out not against social democracy (that is on the whole rather unaffected, despite verbal criticism blaming it for “pacifism and other deviations”),

but against the rampart which protects the bourgeoisie: the official police.<sup>31</sup>

All this is a matter of bourgeois leftism and clearly aims at diverting the proletariat from its society’s critique. A revolutionary direction must fight for the opposite, to prevent the division of work carried out by the bourgeoisie with anaesthetising speeches and processions, with truncheons and police files, from being crowned with success. Rather than confronting super-trained policemen who are just expecting for it, it would be more judicious to attack the social democrats by surprise, clearly less prepared, or to fight policemen when they do not expect it and when we decide it. To walk along social democracy or into different coloured columns, but still in its wake, to give radicalism to these demonstrations, has a catastrophic result for the proletariat. It is necessary to get organised outside and against these social democrat processions, to constitute oneself as a force to stand in their way, and to prevent them from achieving their forums like in Porto Alegre. To structure the proletarian force, to choose our own objectives, to stop considering, as *Attac* and the forum of Porto Alegre do, that the enemy is the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, that’s what will be decisive for the future.

To confront the same objectives as social democracy, even in a violent and radical way, is falling into the ideology of the lesser evil and accepting the frontism, principle that, in the name of antifascism, led the Marxists-Leninists as well as the anarcho-sindicalists and the Trotskyites, to stand for the bourgeois state against the revolution (first in 1936/37 in Spain, and then everywhere around the world).

Until now, only one thing seems to matter: to prevent, through violence, the meetings of the International Monetary Fund, of the World Bank... No mention is ever made of the meetings of *Attac*, or the Socialist International or the Social Forums, and this brings to the fore the weakness of our class and, especially, the predominance of centrism, even in the most radical demonstrations of the proletariat.

In these demonstrations, and in spite of the presence of columns under different colours, the proletariat associates itself with social democracy and marches alone



against the enemies of social democracy, revealing that we are still at the very beginning of the class autonomy process. The proletariat, in order to autonomise itself, must also break from the so-called “autonomists” who lead it in these processions and citizen celebrations, organised by the social democrats (even if it is to radicalise them) that prevent our class from achieving real autonomy.

### Urban guerrilla warfare? Insurrection?

Some people also claim that this kind of confrontation corresponds to a certain extent with “urban guerrilla warfare, a kind of insurrection or insurrectionary practice”. This concept could be interesting if, in reality, it was organised on a basis of its own which is currently not the case. The real insurrectionary revolutionary struggle cannot be based on going to where the repression forces await and stand ready to give us a beating, nor on confronting a hyper-prepared enemy who’s just waiting for it. It’s a good old scenario: the bourgeoisie and the repression leaders send in a troop of over-trained mercenaries against which we come a cropper while they remain safely under cover. What else could they wish better than seeing our force bumping into the shield walls that protect them while they remain unscathed?

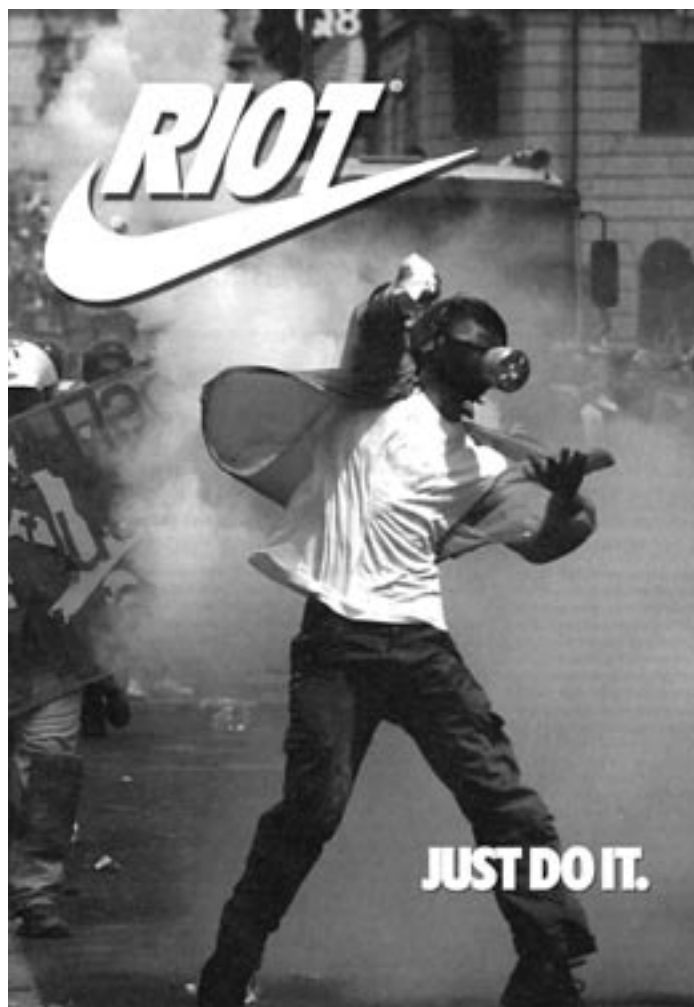
Moreover, the laws of insurrection are precisely the opposite of this scenario: concentration of proletarian forces against an enemy who’s not expecting it; choice of the place and the moment according to the objectives, attack where and when we are less awaited; denial of military-type combat when the odds are unfavourable; spread deceptive rumours of an attack date, and act before, when the enemy isn’t ready yet, or after, when he is tired of waiting; avoid getting stuck into a resistance based upon static strong points; disperse facing an advancing enemy and regroup for surprise counter-attacks; make barracks unusable as well as other places where troops are confined and concentrated to ensure their obedience; hit the capitalists, the governors and the heads of the repression in their homes, prevent them from directing the repres-

sive terrorist operations either by capturing them, isolating them, or somehow hindering their ability to command...

Let’s go even further: from the point of view of the insurrection we have no interest in confronting and destroying policemen as such (even though we’ll show no mercy for any agent of law and order who enforces terror!), what is necessary is the destruction of the coherence of the repression corps (appeal for turning their guns against their officers); to confront the forces used as rampart by the bourgeoisie as a whole does nothing but stiffen their famous esprit de corps.

This is why the “guerrillerist conception” that is nowadays so fashionable deserves all our criticism. This conception presents a caricature of the guerrilla warfare while inciting to the struggle apparatus against apparatus, always favourable to the state. It seems that the “head of insurrectionary operations” –maybe because of the lack of revolutionary perspectives- takes pride in the amount of wounded policemen as well as the number of people put on police files and injured in our ranks. Reports from leftist bourgeois circulating around the Internet and on video, keep track of the number of injured and glorify the spectacular pictures of confrontations, pretending that’s how the social revolution gains ground. A mere consultation of sites like Indymedia is enough to have an idea of the craze for “action” and “revolt” pictures trading that has taken hold of the activist milieu, and of the way of which they deal with this, which, finally, only benefits spectacle... and the police.

The revolutionary struggle will generate injuries, prisoners and deaths among proletarians, but it’s in our interest that they are as few as possible. We already have too many victims! All historic examples clearly indicate that when a proletarian insurrection unfolds, there are not too many victims, and that when the heads of the repression and the bourgeois state are directly attacked; the number of fallen



comrades remains limited. Inversely, the number of victims rises as soon as one calls to resist or to demonstrate against the repressive power of the state.<sup>32</sup>

32. We remind that this article has been written before the G8 meeting in Genoa. The demonstrations that occurred on that occasion provide enough evidence of what we denounce here: one death, hundreds of wounded among our ranks and impunity for the repressive forces.

### Lack of revolutionary program, the violence exhibition

What we just described is another expression of the lack of program and revolutionary perspectives in these confrontations. It is indicative of the absence of a true and deep criticism of the bourgeois society and the non-existence of a strategy aimed at destroying the capitalist society. Hence, to speak of a revolutionary International standing against a capital International amounts to falsify the very nature of a revolutionary International. What revolutionary International do they refer to? To these bright red or azure blue columns, these colourful groups that all join in the same social democrat parade? What makes these columns different from the ones that openly claim their social democrat allegiance? The mere fact that they confront the IMF or WB monsters through the use of violence?

The international secretary of the FSA-IWA feels no shame in declaring that his group, the *blue block*, must show to the poor people all around the world –via television<sup>33</sup>– that in Europe, there are people who fight against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank: “It was a class war rampant tornado, we knew that was not the usual way we operate, but we all knew that we had to show the poor and moribund proletarians from all over the world that here, in Europe, there are courageous people who not only criticize and condemn, but also do not fear to confront physically to the IMF and the WB, who are determined to impede their congresses, who risk their lives and health to put an end to the macabre deeds of the hunger and ecological destruction’s engineers.”

33. Through this mediation, “direct action” is also turned into a caricature!

34. That is one of the great preoccupations of the bourgeoisie, particularly the partisans of national liberation, expressed here by a French journalist: “(...) Young people in Kabylia no longer believe in anything, they only believe in violence, they are absolutely not interested in independence, and the independentist organisations, albeit doing their best, do not succeed in controlling them.”

We see to what point this violence is framed, in a trade union manner, to make sure transgressions aren’t directed against the bourgeois left wing. However, when the proletarian protest is not contained by trade unionists (whether they call themselves libertarian or anarcho-syndicalists), things transpire very differently, and, as it happened in Kabylia, Algeria, the press is forced to admit that the rioters display aggression to both official parties and opposition ones.<sup>34</sup> Quite remarkable as well is the complacency with which these pretentious individuals distinguish the specialists of social change, the anarcho-syndicalists, from the proletarians of the whole world. We shall also note the euro-racist distinction applied to the decisive character of whatever happens in Europe, and the rest of the world where there is nothing more than misery and submission. As if the proletarians of the rest of the world were nothing but ghosts, whose sole hope relies on these European trade-unionist gentlemen to show them the way! It is one of the most colossal falsifications of our times!

And the secretary of the FSA continues: “*But the streets at war have proven very surprising compared to what happens normally. Little by little, those who, with great courage, charged into the police ranks have gained recognition, and it was noticed that, in those instances, capital and state forces were not attacked by punks, hooligans, or disillusioned adolescents, in short by turbulent passers-by without any political sense; right in the middle of these groups of assailants, red and black flags were everywhere to be seen, as well as shields and gas masks bearing the AIT-IWA acronym.*” And to make it perfectly clear that we’re not dealing here with real transgressive action, with private property destruction, as it occurs when the proletariat assails the

bourgeoisie forces as a whole, to insist on the fact that it is merely an attack directed against the right wing, the secretary of the FSA proceeds, as if providing an excuse: “*It is not our way of doing (...) but confronted to the fact that 10,000 politicians and economists were congregating in the centre of Prague, negotiating and planning misery and death for millions of people, that was perhaps the only thing we could do. It should be the politicians and the economists who feel ashamed for the material and personal damage that occurred, not the valorous revolutionaries of the ‘Red and Black’ block, who have demonstrate, in the Lumir street, that Seattle is no more a valid symbol. The new symbol is right here, it’s Prague!*”

This has nothing to do, then, with a revolutionary International against capital. Nothing to do with a proletarian organisation whose elementary task should be, on the contrary, to bring to light the role of both the left wing and the right wing of capitalism, to prove that attacking the International Monetary Fund without also targeting its indispensable complements such as *Attac* & Co. ends up contributing to the strengthening of the



proletariat's enemies. The revolutionary International will organise its practice outside and against social democrat manifestations and will not solely confront a specific faction of capital, since it only fortifies it, but will oppose capital as a whole.

It is of course necessary to define objectives as clearly as possible. We need to affirm the proletariat's struggle against capital, without excluding social democracy, which is capital's branch devoted to taming the proletarians. In Seattle, Prague, Buenos Aires... we met groups of proletarians that brandish such mottos, but the proletariat's lack of political and organisational autonomy leads to the re-appearance, even among the most advanced sectors, of unionist slogans which, despite blaming capital, play nonetheless by its rules. The most "intense" slogan, quoted from the *blue block* in Prague was, according to the secretary of the FSA: "*Against capital, anarcho-syndicalist labour!*"

Today, what we proletarians need most is to build up a class associationism, which has nothing to do with trade unions (whether self-proclaimed anarchist or not!). We need to affirm the core of the revolutionary program, the struggle for the international proletarian revolution, the central question of the struggle against state's power, the struggle for its destruction, the proletarian insurrection, the dictatorship against the market and the rate of profit. To speak of a revolutionary International without including these fundamental elements seems to us counter-productive and deceitful and we assert it serves no other than the reactionary forces. That some do so deliberately and others sincerely think they serve the revolution's cause is actually of little concern!



### About the critique of false ruptures: proletarian rupture against centrism

Before proceeding with our critique on the essential question of false ruptures, let's replace it in the present context of the balance of forces between classes. In all this circus of summits and colourful demonstrations, the guest of honour, invited to applaud and to walk in the official processions, is the proletariat.

As the imposture is too gross, as those who claim to stand at the head of the demonstrations remain the same faces, the same structures, the same social democrat programs, and although they still succeed in subjugating a large number of proletarians (sheep will always exist), the proletariat outflanks them and tends, as it autonomises itself to stand outside and against these citizens citizen celebrations.

But this splitting is not done overnight. Its affirmations still remain partial, and the weakness of our class in its rupture allows different social democrat factions to interpret, to channel the splitting and especially to prevent it from being total. Obviously, these factions that take over decisive points of the communist critique and pretend to defend the revolution, try by all means to enchain the proletariat, to make it dependent and to maintain it under the social democrat yoke. This is the classic role of factions that revolutionaries point out as being centrists because, although they take over some fundamental points of the revolutionary program, they hinder the indispensable qualitative leap that consists precisely in

standing outside and against any capitalistic organisation.

Nowadays like before, centrism stands against the old opportunism and revisionism of social democracy that claim that a development of capital would be favourable to proletarians and therefore revolution should be abandoned for the benefit of evolution.<sup>35</sup> Taking over the proletar-

ian critique against social democracy, a critique that opposes the revolutionary struggle against capital and the state to the open reformism of social democracy, centrism seems to carry out its action under the banner of the struggle against capital and the state, but it objects to the appeal for the constitution of a party outside and against social democracy: a party opposed to elections, to parliamentarianism, to trade unionism, to frontism... and that leads the social war to its ultimate consequences. In this sense, even though it takes over some central aspects of the proletarian critique, as it doesn't take its critiques to the point of their ultimate consequences and as it doesn't oppose social democracy with all its strength, centrism is in fact a full part of it and constitutes indeed the last rampart of capital.

By its nature, centrism oscillates between the revolutionary flags that it waves and a policy preventing the rupture with the historic social democracy, hence the fact that many consider it as suspended between classes. But in reality, this fluctuating policy, led in the name of the proletariat, is not and cannot be suspended above the void. It puts a brake on the constitution of the proletariat as a force and fulfils an objectively counter-revolutionary function, forming in fact an extreme faction of social democracy.

Many groups and organisations present in the circus against the summits convey a set of ideologies that hinder the necessary proletarian rupture, and this, in spite of the fact that these groups and organisations profess the struggle against capital and the state. It is precisely these centrist barriers that we want to denounce.

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35. Already in his time, Bernstein wanted to get rid of the "Hegelianism" in Marx because the question of the transformation of quantity into quality, of the evolution of contradiction into revolution, bothered him greatly. He intended to remove the "Blanquism" too, because he hated even more the fact that this proletarian revolution necessarily implied revolutionary conspiring and insurrection. Nowadays, the movement features this same tendency to elude the rupture, the qualitative leap, the revolution, and the insurrection.



## Anti-capitalism? Against the state?

Facing the proletarian rage against summits and anti-summits, facing the ridiculous and timid character of *Attac* and other social democrat structures – which are in every respect accomplices of the other factions- thousands of proletarians opposed the fundamentals of our class’ critique against these bourgeois critiques. Dozens of groups coming from the five continents, hundreds of leaflets, thrown stones, Molotov cocktails, pamphlets and articles denounce social democrats’ critique towards the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and put forward the struggle against capital and the state. But merely declaring to be against capital is not enough to fight against capitalism, claiming to be an anarchist or a communist is not enough to fight against the state. When we approach the very heart of the content of this critique, we note several confusions concerning the meaning and the ideologisation of an amount of pseudo ruptures, which in fact constitute a centrist position preventing the real proletarian rupture and its insurrectionalist practice.

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36. “Anti-imperialism” is in reality nothing but the defence of imperialist capitalism. To be anti-imperialist without being anti-capitalist is absurd not only because any capitalism is necessarily imperialist, because any state (capital organised as an imperialist force), while ensuring exploitation and oppression of its “own” proletariat, represents on the inter-imperialist battlefield one bourgeois faction against another, but also because, being capital, it is by nature pro-imperialist. This “anti-imperialism” translates into exclusive opposition towards such and such faction, such and such institution (IMF, NATO...), such and such country, which in practice is capitalistic and totally imperialistic.

37. The essence of capitalism is invariant. All oppositions between competitive phases and monopolistic phases, between free trade and imperialist periods have never been anything else but the ideological cover of opportunism in the defence of the “good side” of capitalism: “democracy”, industrialisation, and, in reality, support to one of the blocks within the imperialist war.



There is so an “anti-capitalist” fashion. A lot of groups and organisations claim to be “anti-capitalists”. Nevertheless, in their practice, we very often notice that they confine themselves to the denunciation of multinational companies, monopolies, financial capital, “imperialism”<sup>36</sup>, certain countries as well as the International Monetary Fund and the similar institutions, which comes in fact to support in a thinly veiled way the social democrat ideology of capitalism humanisation. This kind of “anti-capitalism” is nothing new; it is an old social democrat story. Already in Marx’ time, these kind of anti-capitalist, socialist ideologies were in fashion, and he denounced them as bourgeois and petty bourgeois socialism. Thereafter, social democracy has theorised that “capitalism is henceforth monopolistic and imperialistic”<sup>37</sup>, then justifying opportunism and reformism, and contributing to imperialistic war in the name of a more democratic capitalism.

Nowadays, bourgeois anti-capitalists who invariably defend a bourgeois state against another are a common thing. Moreover, entire fractions of the international bourgeoisie, that have always, in the name of socialism, supported the capitalistic and imperialistic policy of the Russian block (and sometimes belonged to it), now attempt to recycle themselves. Let us only mention the many leftist sectors that spoke about anti-capitalism in order to better defend a faction against another in the imperialistic confrontation, as at the time of the Gulf War where, in their opposition to “the Yankees”, these leftists didn’t support the proletariat but rather the Baath party, the republican guard and Saddam Hussein.

For us, it is indispensable to denounce these positions, and that’s what a leaflet signed “some libertarians” does, distributed in Canada in April 2001:

*“But more insidious because closer to us, marching in our footsteps, is this new extreme tendency of respectable citizenism: of course, we’re talking about this movement self-proclaimed ‘anti-capitalist’, ‘anti-authoritarian’, ‘self-managementist’, and so on. Under the new anti-capitalism lays capital!!!”*

*To this radical wing skilled in anti-capitalist rhetoric that deftly handles declarations of principles, we’d be tempted to reply: ‘keep talking, baby!’ In fact, they have a grudge against financial capital and corporations; this is the old anti-imperialism that reappears through the back door. Childish socialism of yesterday turned into a commendable anti-capitalism paired with a requirement for total democracy. All the capitalistic separations are magnified into real identities that should be safeguarded and promoted (sex, age, race, nationality, social or economic roles, minerals, plants and cosmos, the list is endless...). This turbulent wing discreetly recovers the business of their more respectable elders, but in front of the media gallery they accuse them of treason. Besides, it mostly acts as a shock troop for parties and trade unions, which in turn use them as scarecrows.”*

The critique of the currently trendy affinitarian ideology, made by our “libertarian” comrades, appears to be especially relevant. Instead of pushing the proletariat towards unification on the basis of the homogeneity of interests, perspectives and social project, this affinitarian ideology strengthens all the divisions and separa-

tions of capital by magnifying them into real identities to be protected: culture, sex, race, age, region, and even sometimes beliefs, sects, opinions, religions... Fashionable music could be a criteria of affinity, but regrouping upon this single basis can only separate proletarians and sort them into categories developed by bourgeois society whereas what we need is to shatter all these little “boxes” and to develop an homogeneous force against capital.<sup>38</sup>

### Contradictory expressions of the proletarian rupture

But this typical bourgeois and leftist “anti-capitalism” still coexists (although we battle against this coexistence) with a deep critique of social democracy that somehow expresses the difficult rising proletariat’s rupture against social democracy at international level. This rupture is of course jammed, curbed by this leftist ideology of social democracy that is also undergoing a full recycling process (like garbage) and is painting itself with “anti-capitalism” and “anti-statism” colours.

In some cases proletarian ruptures are clear and demarcating; in some others we can still find the whole leftist ideology of the 60’s and 70’s, that drags along Marxism-Leninism as well as Trotskyism, Castrism, Guevarism, bourgeois anti-imperialism, and reconciliation of this whole cocktail under the libertarian banner, always in fashion.

To express this contradiction we chose the example of the *Young anti-capitalists’ Manifesto against the World Social Forum* (see the frame).

This document expresses a proletarian critique of the World Social Forum organised by social democracy in Porto Alegre, and clearly affirms that “another world is possible” – main slogan of the Porto Alegre anti-summit- “only by destroying capitalism”. It seems to us very important that this decisive point also materialises into the denunciation of social democracy’s parties and trade unions, into the denunciation of their repressive and anti-proletarian daily social practice, especially with regards to Brazilian social democrat

## YOUNG ANTI-CAPITALISTS’ MANIFESTO AGAINST THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

From Seattle to Washington, London, Minau, Melbourne, Seoul, Prague, and Nice, tens of thousands of young anti-capitalists have repeatedly denounced, through direct action, the large monopolies and international organisms such as the IMF, the World Bank and the European Union. These institutions are responsible for the exploitation of millions of workers, for the destruction of the environment, and for the submission of millions of people to the worst conditions of poverty. The denunciation of these young anti-capitalists is unambiguous when they shout in the streets around the world: “Capitalism kills, let us kill capitalism” and “Down with the IMF”.

Now, here in Porto Alegre, in the World Social Forum, the NGO’s, the trade unionist bureaucracies and the headship of the institutionalised parties alter the content of the young anti-capitalists’ struggle and substitute it with the reactionary policy of “humanization of capital”. To humanize capital with the French ministers who persecute immigrants and take part in the government, which, with the NATO, bombed Yugoslavia, assassinating thousands of people and repressing the anti-capitalists in Nice; to humanize capitalism with bankers and multinational corporations, to humanize capitalism side by side with the governments which, like the PT [Brazilian Workers’ Party of Lula], keep on paying the debt, repress the teachers’ strike in Rio Grande do Sul and the occupation of a federal public domain in Porto Alegre by the MST (Movement of the Landless), repress ambulant merchants and the homeless during the urban occupations in Porto Alegre, and continue to give money to multinational corporations.

Truly, the star [reference to the star symbol of the PT] guiding this prefecture and government, so-called popular and democratic in view of the 2002 elections, has decided to act as an experimental base for a new form of capitalism management based on a social democracy<sup>39</sup> allowing bourgeois exploitation and pleasing the middle-class with illusions of democracy, such as the Participative Budget which circumvents social protests by co-opting the popular movements. And to complete the picture, there are all the other “left-wing” parties, which, even when they criticise that policy, capitulate rather than put it into question more consistently.

To humanize capitalism is utopian and reactionary. This is why we, young anti-capitalists of the Youth Camp, we stick with the anti-capitalist movement and express our solidarity towards the young people who, in Davos, denounced the World Economic Forum. And we say that the World Social Forum is an imposture created by those who wish to divert the anti-capitalist class struggle into a class collaboration policy and elections, hence maintaining the implementation of capitalism’s misery.

This is why we form our own workshops centred on the creation of a anti-capitalist national network, whose motto is “Down with the World Economic Forum, the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation”, to which the World Social Forum is no alternative, “Down with the Colombia Plan”, “Long live the Palestinian Intifada”, “No to the payment of the external debt”, “No to privatisations”.

Capitalism kills; let us kill capitalism. It is the duty of youth and workers, faithful to the spirit of Seattle, Nice, Prague and Davos, to prevent the anti-capitalist intervention to be distorted and used by its own enemies.<sup>40</sup>

38. The organisation of the proletariat as an historic force requires a structuring that is totally antagonist to these bourgeois divisions. As the proletarian organisation will grow, it will manage to mix within its cells proletarians from different races, cultures, sex, age and to overstep the limits and divisions enforced by capital, to reform at last the human world community.

39. What is new about it?

40. The organisations that have signed this pamphlet are: Juventude Em Luta Revolucionária, Jornal Espaço Socialista, Comitê

Marxista Revolucionário, Anarcho-Punks, Movimento Che Vive (RJ), Coletivo Pela Universidade Popular (Porto Alegre), Secretaria Estadual de Casas de estudantes de Goiás, Grupo Cultural Semente de Esperança, Ação Global pela Justiça Local, Resistencia Popular – RJ/PA, Núcleo Zumbi Zapatista – ABC Paulista, Estrategia Revolucionária, Socialismo Libertário – Brasília, Federación Anarquista Uruguaya, Ação Revolucionária Marxista (RJ), Frente de Luta Popular, Juventude Avançar na Luta, Liga Bolchevique Internacinalista, Agrupación En Clave ROJA, Espaço Popular. Contact: [gnilock@hotmail.com](mailto:gnilock@hotmail.com)



parties such as the Workers' Party of Lula, this Brazilian Walesa. We also need to emphasize the frontal denunciation of the ideology of capitalism humanisation, omnipresent in summits and anti-summits, as well as the affirmation of the fact that capitalism is murder and we therefore need to murder it.

However, although it represents a contribution towards the critique of this world (and this is why we publish it), this manifesto is confused and denotes a lack of rupture concerning some aspects, probably because it is a production of several groups with different political programs. With the following examples, we shall try to affirm the critique made by the proletariat and further the deepening of the rupture with social democracy and its centrist expressions. We will try to send these critiques to the different groups that signed the manifesto.

- The manifesto does not refer to proletariat against capitalism but to “young anti-capitalists” (and even to “poor people”), which is a concession to fashionable terminology (and as for the word “people”, a concession to popular-frontist social democracy).

- The manifesto puts the blame for “the exploitation of millions of workers” on IMF, World Bank, WTO and European Union, which is a typical concession to social democrat anti-imperialism and anti-monopolism, which ruled in Porto Alegre WSF. These institutions are not “responsible” for exploitation, as social democracy tries to make us believe; it's capitalism itself, every (big-, medium- or small-sized) capitalistic enterprise, the bourgeois of every (big-, medium- or small-sized) country that holds the responsibility.<sup>41</sup>

- The manifesto says “Long live the Palestinian Intifada” and not the struggle of the proletariat in Palestine against capital and the state. It's as if there were not, in Palestine, the same class contradictions that exist everywhere else; which is

problematic if you refer to the previous point. In Palestine this watchword is not a class watchword; even worse, it is the watchword of the PLO bourgeoisie and the Arabian national states, like Libya. In Brazil, and elsewhere in the world, and for the same reasons, this watchword cannot be a proletarian one either. On the contrary, it is in favour of the bourgeoisie, of its imperialistic allies, and even of the police that tortures in that region and also supports the “Palestinian Intifada”.

- The manifesto contains some typical slogans from the struggles between bourgeois factions such as: “No to the payment of external debt”, and that are no more than a matter of negotiation between factions of international capital. Indeed, the non-payment the debt would not alter in any way the level of exploitation and would therefore not improve in the slightest, the fate of the proletariat. Only the national bourgeoisie would benefit from it. Once again, it is the governments (left- as well as right-wing ones) that assert that our misery is caused by the debts of “our state” and “our bourgeoisie”; they are the ones, which try to convince us that the debt is not a bourgeois' debt but the debt “of the people of such or such country”. Another example: “No to privatisations”. As if the fact that capital changes hands could increase or decrease the misery of our class!

It is social democracy that has always said that the nationalisation of capital improves the situation of the working class! As if in the countries where capital is juridically more state-controlled there was less misery, as Leninist, Trotskyite and Stalinist factions of social democracy allege.

It is clear that the issues we have criticised above have a common denominator: the fact that the revolutionary critique of capital remains impregnated with an “anti-imperialistic”, third-worldist critique, that is to say, a bourgeois critique. Indeed and in spite of a pseudo radicalisation, these are the claims of social democracy:

- Social democracy refers to “the people”; the manifesto refers to “the poor people”;

- Social democracy focuses the responsibility on free trade and the policies of the IMF and the World Bank; the manifesto affirms that capitalism is murder but considers these institutions responsible for exploitation;

- Social democracy always supported national liberation and therefore imperialistic wars as well; the manifesto supports the “Palestinian Intifada” and not the proletariat fighting against capitalism in Palestine (against the state of Israel, against the PLO's one, against capital and against the state, basically);

- Social democracy –like the right wing- always presented the bourgeois' debt as a national problem in order to rouse solidarity from the proletarians with the bourgeois of every country; the manifesto considers the question of the debt as everybody's problem and not exclusively the bourgeois' problem. The manifesto demands the “Non-payment of the debt”, which only leads to the mobilisation of the proletariat for the support of some national and international factions that will benefit from the debt cancellation,



41. To consider that these institutions are the source of exploitation constitutes obviously a revision, a falsification of the very concept of exploitation, as we shall explain further in this article.



whereas our class has nothing to gain in this matter;

• Finally, the manifesto opposes privatisations to nationalisations and defends the latter. It therefore supports the capitalistic state as owner against private capital. This is the classic position of social democracy (dear to Marxists-Leninists) that defends the juridical nationalisation of the means of production.<sup>42</sup>

Wide sectors of social democracy have, by pure opportunism, renounced some of these issues, like the last two for example, but this in no way confers on them a proletarian character; defending them does not push the battle against capital one single step further.

### Destruction of commodity?

It is logical that revolutionaries brandish the critique of commodity that the proletariat has always put forward; it is logical that nowadays, the struggles of the proletariat try, in an increasingly clearer way, to reach their aim: the destruction of commodity society.

But most of the time, this tendency is understood and has repercussions in a completely immediatist way, and many claim to be achieving the destruction of the world of commodity society and the empire of commodity through actions such as those led in Seattle.

In this way, the “Appeal of a Black Block at the Summit of Americas in April, 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001” said: “*A spectre haunts America, it is the spectre of the anarchist rioter. His well-known black mask, made necessary by the vertiginous rise of electronic surveillance, is henceforth recognized as the symbol of a social terrorism, which nowadays and more than ever appears to us as a human imperative and a moral duty.*

*Rioters in Seattle have, we hope, opened up the way to the destruction of the commodity empire. By attacking the very heart of the American fortress, that no one suspected to be so fragile, and the object of the capitalistic modern cult, in short, by smashing shop windows that reflected our status of*

*loyal consumers, rioters gave to the struggle against globalisation of the markets the only possible liberating content.*

*Suddenly, a struggle that seemed to be getting definitively stuck in the precipice of servile compromise brought to us for 60 years by the same unionist-collaborationists and the same bureaucrats of the community under state subcontract, suddenly, this struggle became a danger... By directly attacking the windowed goods, rioters in Seattle didn't only satisfy their desire to possess these too often inaccessible products that advertisement concocts for us as the climax of happiness. They essentially attacked the main goal the whole of the present oppressive system aims at, they attacked the main realisation of our society: commodity.”*

In all these actions, the proletariat expresses in an elementary way its critique of the bourgeois society and programs that propose a more human capitalism. And it is correct to affirm that this critique expresses the re-emergence of the proletarian antagonism towards the world of private property and commodity. But believing that the commodity is in such way being destroyed or that this is the way that leads to its destruction, is turning a blind eye to all revolutionary perspectives, it means confusing a quite limited action, an elementary protest, with revolution itself.



Appropriation and/or destruction of any particular commodity are an elementary act of all proletarian revolts. As an act of protest, as an attack against private property, it was always part of the riots, but this is not an act of destruction of “The Commodity”. Commodity cannot be destroyed by the physical attack on the thing, it is necessary to destroy its other pole: value. Attacking its immediacy, the object, cannot abolish the commodity. To abolish it, it is necessary to destroy its social form: its very essence. Between this elementary form of demonstration of hate towards capitalism and its actual destruction, the main thing is simply missing: social revolution, proletarian insurrection, revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, despotic destruction of the market as well as the “equality, liberty, fraternity” inherent to it, eradication of private property, democracy, law of value, and with them, the indispensable organisation of social production according to human needs.<sup>43</sup>

One may say that the text expresses itself in a symbolic way, that it is a parable, which obviously appeals for a real direction, and that's what is meant by destruction of commodity.<sup>44</sup> Nothing of the kind! Blind optimism and immediatism

42. Which is erroneously named as state capitalism, as if capitalism changed nature due to its juridical statehood, which does not necessarily coincide with the real concentration, centralisation and economic nationalisation of capital, as we have already attested.

43. During several proletarian insurrections such as those that occurred in Germany in 1919, or in Spain in the 30's, revolutionaries at war with money and capital and imposing class violence in a city burnt money. But that situation was totally different: it was a symbolic act, taking place during the insurrectional full development of the revolution.

44. Without insisting here on the numerous confusions that those “anarchists” accept and that derive from the dominant ideology, we shall mention only one: to stand against “the globalisation of markets” is significant of huge concessions to the novelty ideology, developed by social democracy.

are obvious and counterproductive in the following affirmation of the text: *“We anarchists (nevertheless not the whole of us are rioters!), revolted, or simply responsible citizens, we shall leave total devastation in our wake. And when in the morning we shall sweep out glass splinters and goods that we have converted into projectiles, making them useful for once, what will then be swept are the ruins of oppression.”*

However many kilograms of stones have been thrown, whatever amount of commodities and shop windows have been destroyed... imagining that the ruins of oppression can be swept without a social revolution, that capitalism can be destroyed without revolution, without revolutionary dictatorship is as utopian as to dream of a more human capitalism like *“Attac”* and the bourgeois of the Porto Alegre forum do. It is the same kind of stupid illusion than imagining destroying the police by merely confronting a few dozen or hundreds of cops. Impossible! Capitalism under its normal functioning mode has and will always destroy commodity (usually in order to prevent the devaluation of such kind of commodity in particular): liquidation and arson of stocks, destruction during wars... and this doesn't undermine commodity in the slightest. On the contrary, the particular destruction of commodities always reinforces the world of commodity and valorisation.

Finally, alleging that during these summits and anti-summits, on basis of the so-called “direct action”, the proletariat might have at last discovered the way of proletarian internationalism or, as some groups already assert, that through these actions we might have entered a phase of direct confrontation between the capitalist International and the revolutionary International, is clearly a failure to understand the functioning of capitalism and the revolution program, the revolutionary strategy. This inevitably leads to

stirring up confusion, by playing a centrist role in the proletarian movement (by preventing the necessary rupture).

In order to show how this kind of activist ideology leads to “forgetting” the fundamental aspects of the revolutionary program, we shall once more quote the above-mentioned appeal, which claims to fight against capital, the state and patriarchy, but, however, in a text headed *“Down with reformists”*, claims: *“Social order should be achieved through solidarity of interests and free association, and not through oppression of ideas and people. The State, even though it's composed with ‘elected’ people, is also formed with civil servants. We need to understand that these civil servants don't exist because of necessity, but rather as a result of the lack of democracy in our system.”*

The text doesn't criticise democracy; it imputes the state's harm to the lack of democracy, as any reformist does. One may respond that many militants organised within the *Black Block* scene do not share this social democrat position, and we're sure this is true. However, the sad thing is that concerning such important and central issues of the social democrat program, such as this fishy denunciation of the lack of democracy, such antagonistic positions can coexist. This is one of the unavoidable consequences of libertarian ideology and freethinking. For us on the contrary the critique of democracy is the key of the critique of the bourgeois state. It is not by asking for more democracy that we shall destroy the state, it is by abolishing practically and authoritatively this famous democracy, as pure as it may be.<sup>45</sup>

### Communisation?

Another so-called “new” centrist ideology is the one called nowadays “communisation”. For example, the leaflet signed “some libertarians”, quoted above for its interesting critique of pseudo-anti-



capitalism, affirms: *“In order to lead to the production of new social relations, the attacks against capitalism must already contain a communisation of the struggle and the relations which emerge from it. There is no positive project anymore, no possible proletarian affirmation within capital.”*

Of course, we agree with the fact that in the struggle against capital we must produce new relations and that there is not any possible proletarian affirmation within capital. The problem is this “little word”, very trendy nowadays in some pseudo-revolutionary circles: “communisation”. As if communism could develop little by little without before destroying capitalism, as if it could emerge without first completely wiping out capitalism, as if the capitalistic market could disappear without a human despotism exerted against it. In fact this theory is not new either. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century some sectors of social democracy developed what they then designated as “socialisation”: society had to “socialise” itself little by little.

It is clear that the advocates of the theory of “communisation” will consider this parallel like as an offence and will protest by saying that we're dealing with a totally different matter. In practice however, in both cases a gradualist conception is introduced, and the qualitative leap that insurrection, the dictatorship against the rate of profit and value constitute, is overtly denied; without this leap talking about communisation or socialisation can only confuse and serve the Reaction.

On the other hand, the present ideology of “communisation” emerges from a group,

45. It is impossible to quote here the different works of criticising democracy in which we substantiate its key role in the capitalist domination. We shall mention only one translated into English: “Against the myth of democratic rights and liberties” in *Communism n°8*.



which never split from social democracy, from Leninism and euro-centrism. “*Théorie Communiste*” is a typically euro-centrist group according to which all what happens in Europe is the feat of the proletariat, and all what that happens far from Europe is the feat of the popular masses (they went as far as describing the proletarian revolt in Iraq in 1991 as a “popular uprising”!). In the same way, “*Théorie Communiste*” overtly defends that in Russia, at the time of Lenin, the dictatorship of the proletariat ruled! For internationalist revolutionaries, it is clear that this dictatorship was exerted *against* the proletariat and that it was no more than the same old capitalistic dictatorship, as we have demonstrated in several analyses.<sup>46</sup> On these bases (that assimilate the program of the proletariat with the development of capitalism, as defended by Lenin) and on the basis of the theorisation according to which the question of the revolutionary transition would be historically out of date because the program of the proletariat has been achieved by capital<sup>47</sup>, it is considered that the proletariat could negate itself and achieve communism without reinforcing as a class and imposing its dictatorship (which is overtly revisionist).

This theory could seem modern and attractive, but it is absolutely unclear on the essential issue of the revolution, the insurrection and the revolutionary and dictatorial action of destruction of the bourgeois society. How would the proletariat be able to negate itself without constituting itself as a force? Certainly not within capitalism, as claimed by social democracy. By getting organised outside and against capitalism. By getting organised outside of its

parliamentary and trade unionist structures and against its processions and its sheep demonstrations, by constituting itself as an antagonistic force against all this circus. Only by constituting itself as an international force, as a revolutionary party aimed at destroying the bourgeois world can the proletariat, in the same process, negate itself and destroy capital and the state. To try and make us believe that the world could be “communised” without the organised power of the proletariat as a party, means collaborating with all the bourgeois leftist political spectrum that strives to deny precisely the most important aspect: the violent and total shattering of the capitalistic order by the revolution; the quality leap, the revolutionary conspiracy and the insurrection, the international organisation of the proletariat as communist party, its destructive action of the whole bourgeois society. Talking about communism without referring to all this is utopian and reactionary.

If the classic terminology of the revolutionaries struggling for the revolutionary party, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat or for a proletarian semi-state... bothers the “libertarian” comrades who wrote this leaflet, let them choose another one, provided they don’t give up the main thing: the insurrectionary struggle, the destruction of capitalism through violence. Many revolutionaries, from Bakunin to Flores Magon used words like dictatorship of the international brothers, dictatorship of anarchy, dictatorship of workers’ councils and even “liberal party”, without

however

(and that’s why they were revolutionaries) giving up the essential: the necessity of the concentration of the revolutionary violence, of the revolutionary armed struggle, the necessity to get rid of capitalism through class violence.

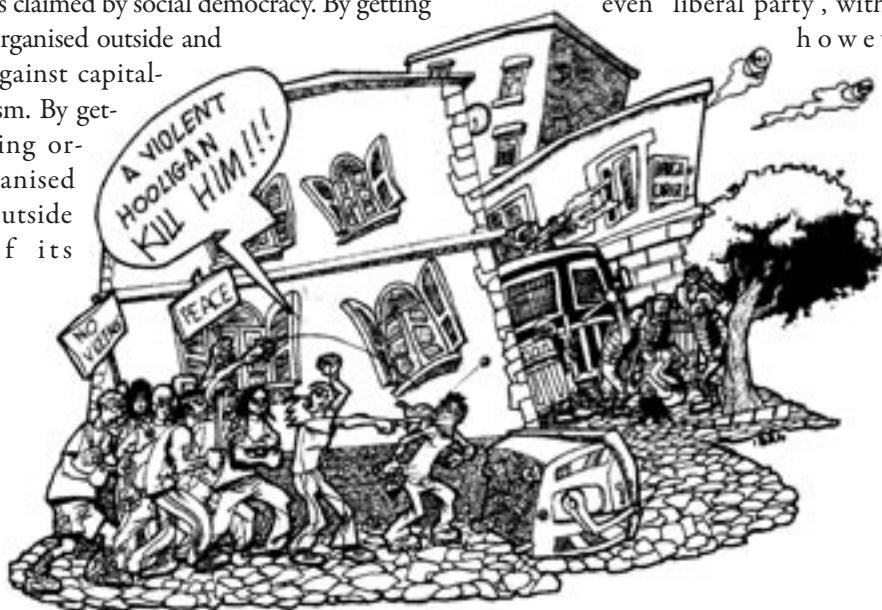
In the environment where our “libertarian” comrades operate, it is not a matter of words. When they consider communism without revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, these comrades are actually giving up social revolution<sup>48</sup>.

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46. On this matter, read our series of articles on the 1917-1923 period in Spanish and French (but unfortunately not yet in English): “Rusia, contrarrevolución y desarrollo del capitalismo” – “Russie, contre-révolution et développement du capitalisme”, and especially the articles “La concepción socialdemócrata de transición al socialismo” – “La conception sociale-démocrate de la transition au socialisme” and “Contra el mito de la transformación socialista. La política económica y social de los bolcheviques y la continuidad capitalista” – “Contre le mythe de la transformation socialiste. La politique économique et sociale des bolchéviques”.

47. Here is a quotation that needs no comment: “Anyway, the proletariat’s program was already fulfilled by capital. The democratic universal republic, we had it: it was the UNO (United Nations Organization) plus the IMF (International Monetary Fund). Also the development of the productive forces: it was the automation’s infernal cadences.

48. It does not seem important, nor even relevant, to analyse any further the fantasies of “*Théorie Communiste*”, because this small group of initiates took fun in redefining all the concepts, and to get into the details would require excessively long terminological explanations. Let us simply say that the most ludicrous aspects of their program, such as the theory of surpassing programmatism, the historic surpassing of transition, the theory of self-negation of the proletariat without its affirmation as a class, derived from the fact that “program”, for “*Théorie Communiste*”, means the program of social democracy, “transition” means Leninist transition, “affirmation of the proletariat” means affirmation of the Bolshevik power in Russia... All this construction is based on social-democrat concepts, and loses all interest as soon as those terms are defined according to the communist critique of bolshevism, as it was the case, within the Third International, for what was then called the German, Italian... and generally the international Communist Left.





## Direct action?

Historically, the proletariat always opposed direct action against social democracy, this fundamental force of containment and channelling of the proletarian struggle whose strategy relies on the representation and the mediation in trade unions, parliaments, elections and support to delegates and political leaders... Direct action means an action without mediator nor delegate, assumed by all, strike and demonstration, occupation of the street, revolutionary violence, insurrection, revolutionary dictatorship, action that does not require mediation nor delegation and, in this way, historically constitutes the contrary of democratic action, of citizen life.

Nowadays, in Davos, Seattle, Prague, Gothenburg, Naples, and Genoa... some militant groups revel in words like direct action they merely assimilate with violent action in the street. However, if violence is indeed one component of direct action, it is not enough to define it.

Direct action of the proletariat against the parliamentarianism, trade unionism, electoralism... of social democracy does need neither mediation, nor delegation, nor representative elections, which can be applied generally and reproducibly everywhere and by all.

It means that to be *direct*, in the historic meaning of the word, violent action cannot rest on delegations and must be executable by proletarians wherever they may be. The key of direct action, which we oppose to social democracy, lies precisely

in the fact that any proletarian group can assume it where it is, and, through this practice, oppose delegation, and mediation which are determining elements of democracy and therefore of any bourgeois political domination.

Direct action claimed in Seattle, Prague, Davos, Gothenburg, Naples, and Genoa... is not of this kind. Indeed, violence is mystified there because it is used as a synonym for direct action, whereas in practice, action is undertaken by sending delegates to a place defined as the centre where direct action par excellence is supposed to be developed.

This doesn't mean that action led against the circus of summits and anti-summits is not a part of the proletariat's direct action. What we criticise is that the present organisations don't urge the militants to struggle on a daily basis, where they live (capital is everywhere), but magnify their own activism and present their "direct action" as the most valid.

The mystification that consists in considering Davos, Seattle, Prague, Gothenburg, Naples, and Genoa... as decisional centres of capital, and the fact that these confrontations are given a semi-insurrectional status they don't actually deserve, makes those groups consider that "direct action" consists, par excellence, in battling against capitalism according to the timetable of bourgeois congresses, as if any other struggle had only a local significance and was therefore of lesser importance. They forget that apart from proletarians who actually live in the cities where summits and anti-summits are held

and take to the streets, only a handful of militants, of delegates of the proletariat of different countries can go to these conferences in order to perform "direct action", and therefore the principle of delegation is maintained. That these delegates throw more stones and Molotov cocktails changes nothing to the fact that it is still a mediation through which the majority of the proletariat should feel represented. As the previously quoted trade unionist said: "*so that the poor of the world can see...*" that in Europe there are trade unionists... who represent them!

It is obviously encouraging to see that in any country where summits are held, the proletariat aggressively denounces these capitalistic celebrations and takes to the street, it is stimulating to see that groups of proletarians coming from other countries collaborate on the organisation of these actions, and moreover, that they also organise them (and/or coordinate and centralise the organisation) in other countries. This is not what we criticise; the coordination and the organisation beyond borders are fundamental for the affirmation and the strengthening of the community of struggle that will destroy capital.

What we affirm is that the majority of proletarians from other countries are not able to go where these events take place, and besides that have no interest in doing so. Contrary to what centrists of all kinds publish, whose appraisal of the next "triumph" is based on the thousands of activists or hundreds of buses that will go to the next summit, this cannot be our perspective.

All the more so since those who can attend such events are only a minority under very particular conditions, notably exceptional work conditions with regards to free time and remuneration, which enable them to afford the trip. In some cases, hundreds of proletarians and revolutionary militants make a huge effort to send some dozens of militants to these capitalistic jamborees, but it is obvious that in general only trade-union apparatuses and political parties, conceived for functioning through delegation, can afford this type of trip on regular basis. No wonder then if, in addition to the cops and the secret service agents of several countries, political and trade union delegates swarm



in the streets of the cities that shelter the summits and anti-summits.

From the point of view of the proletariat the real direct action is first and foremost the action led every day against the boss, against the bourgeoisie facing us, against parties and trade unions that want to contain us. We need to generalise it, to make it worldwide; we need to coordinate it, to encourage the militant exchanges between countries; we need to fight together everywhere against world capital, but it is absurd to imagine that the more militants we gather in one single spot the better it will be. At the time of the insurrection, the world proletariat won't be concentrated in one place, because it won't be a matter of destroying commodity in any particular city or any particular country, but on the whole planet and we won't achieve this by confronting either a local police force or a national one, but by destroying the bourgeois power as a whole and all over the world.

To believe that proletarians will gather and express themselves more and more massively against conferences until capitalism ends up blowing up is not only harmful and counterproductive for the movement, but it originates in stupid illusions and distorts the very concept of direct action. Even if it is invited to do so, the combative proletariat won't take part in these bourgeois demonstrations. At the very most, some groups that represent it, as well as trade-union delegates who would like to speak in their name. Anyway, the interest of the revolutionary groups which would decide to go

there wouldn't be to make the apology of "direct action" these representatives promote, but rather to centralise the direct action of the proletariat that we have to urge everywhere.

### Proletarian interest and centrist ideology

Let us summarize some aspects of the contradiction between proletarian interest and centrist ideology.

The proletariat's interest lies in programmatic unification and operational decentralization, unity in leadership and revolutionary perspective and, contradictorily, scattering and dispersion of action, while targeting the same enemy.

But the dominant ideology, even among groups that have split with social democracy, seems to impulse the opposite: let's concentrate all our forces in one particular spot of the planet, at this day and hour (in line with the summits and anti-summits' dictates!), but, politically, let everyone do whatever he wants, let groups constitute according to their affinities, rally around their own ideas (and this, of course, without any kind of centralization whatsoever).

The proletariat's interest is unique and worldwide, and can only be imposed through unification against all the divisions resulting from capital's society, whose credo, whose rule, is the struggle of all against all. Women, elderly, children, unemployed, Arabs, coloured people, miners, farmers, students, Asians, Latino-Americans, Europeans, Africans, landless peasants, shanty-town dwellers... all have, independently from what they think or believe, or have been persuaded to think or believe, the same interest in abolishing the bourgeois society.

But the dominant ideology uses any pretext to impose its divisions, based on race, sex, culture, ethnic group... and even among break-

away groups, the freedom and affinity ideology continues to prevail. Instead of building up proletarian unity, the bourgeois society's partitions are reproduced, in name of local specificity and the freedom of all. It is advocated to constitute several regroupings around the divisions enforced by capital, founded on culture, race, religion, tastes and habits, like these groups that bring together the aficionados of a certain type of music, homosexuals, animal protectors, Coca-cola cans collectors, etc.

The communist revolution's interest is to restore the criticism of capitalism up to its very foundations, the destruction of wage labour, commodity, state... and therefore focus on the question of power, the necessity of the proletarian insurrection and destruction of the state.

But the predominant ideology in this milieu encourages everyone to criticize capitalism and imagine changes in their own way, and to elaborate plans and gather around affinities. As if the destruction of capitalism were dissociable from the destruction of the bourgeoisie's armed power, as if there were plenty of different ways to achieve destruction of the bourgeois society, as if centuries of class struggle hadn't established by now what is revolutionary and what isn't...

The interest of the communist revolution is, wherever it occurs, proletarian action against worldwide capital, direct action against the bourgeoisie and the state that stand against us<sup>49</sup>, and the generalisation of these confrontations.

Another predominant ideology in several proletarian groups that have broken away with social democracy consists in aiming at sending activists to support demonstrations.

The interest of the proletariat lies in a total and irreversible rupture with social democracy and its whole program, therefore implying a rupture with democracy, anti-imperialism and third-worldism.

The dominant ideology, in the name of freedom, exhorts proletarians into a unity



49. It's the same struggle as ever, that during the war, takes shape into revolutionary defeatism. Read "The invariance of the revolutionary position on war. The meaning of revolutionary defeatism", in Communism n°12.



without principles, without program, without clear rupture, and often they fall for the social democrat lure of critical support to democracy. The interest of the proletariat is to get organized as a force, as an international power coordinating and programmatically centralizing actions that arise everywhere around the globe.

The more decentralized the action and more centralized the leadership, the fiercer the proletarian struggle<sup>50</sup>.

Activist ideology impulses on the contrary a political decentralization and an operational centralization, that is to say an absence of unity in leadership and the concentration of all militants on the same spot.

### The proletarian movement is one

However, the movement of the worldwide proletariat, our movement, is one, and is so whether its protagonists are aware of it or not: those who battled to enter Quito, fought the same war, whether they realized it or not, than those who broke shop windows in Seattle and those who, at this very moment, confronted the bourgeois state in Algeria. We could add to the list the landless peasants in Brazil, the deserters and revolutionary defeatists of the whole world, as well as the “anti-capitalists” or “anti-statists” who form small groups to challenge capitalism on the barricades.

And yet, none of these movements perceives to which extent they all actually all belong to one and only movement aiming at abolishing the present conditions. The

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50. Centralisation of the leadership, centralized leadership does not mean (whatever may say the anti-authoritarian ideology that prevails nowadays) petty bosses, bureaucracy, and hierarchy as with capitalism and even in the Marxist-Leninist or libertarian groups. On the contrary, the more decentralized the action, the more accurately the proletariat will know where to direct the movement. Let every part of the moment know where to concentrate its forces and how to strike the enemy, and let them do it together. Let every local fraction of the world proletariat was part of one and the same body, that's what the revolutionaries mean by “organic centralism”, opposed to the democratic centralism of capitalism.

proletariat as a class hasn't re-appropriated its experience, or its strength, yet. In other articles we explain the reasons of this generalized class unawareness and we provide its historic reasons, that sum up to the triumph of the counter-revolution in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the concealment of the revolutionary struggle's whole history.

Here, we have decided to focus on the obstacles that today prevent the proletariat, in its different international expressions, from perceiving it belongs to one and the same revolutionary class. We shall not further develop the “what is to be done” and “here and now” topics. We can return to our examples of Seattle and Ecuador, to illustrate the separation between two movements in appearance so different.

Despite the actual separation and the unawareness that it is one and the same movement, in both cases the proletariat confronts the same enemy and faces, to a certain extent, the same ideological limitations. In both cases, the confrontation against capitalism, the rupture achieved in the field, the attempt to get organized outside and against the local social-democrat fraction, is neither theorized nor practically assumed on a permanent basis. This is why, when the movement leaves the streets, social democracy always manages, although by different ways, to catch it back and re-introduce all separations in it.

Yet, the question of the rupture with social democracy and assuming the worldwide proletariat's movement as a unique movement is one and the same problem. Only a permanent and organized rupture, leading to its ultimate consequences the criticism we develop here, will allow the worldwide proletariat to acknowledge itself as such. And in a reciprocal way, only the acknowledgment of constituting one and the same movement, through a correspondent organization at international level, will lead the proletariat to assume once and for all its rupture with social democracy. There is no other way so that every direct proletarian action in one place is understood everywhere else as the affirmation of the same organic being, capable of constituting a real international leadership. To speak of historic confrontation between the international of capital and the revolutionary international will then take its full meaning.

### What's to be done?

The analysis of the objective balance of forces is not aimed at contemplating the world “as it is”. For the revolutionaries, it constitutes, on the contrary, the basis for subjective action. It is not a matter of portraying the world; the point is to transform it.





From Ecuador to Seattle, we are all on same boat, all in this same capitalist society which we fight as we can. It is a struggle community that affirms itself and stands out.

We are deeply implicated in both types of movement around the world; we fight so that every expression of the proletariat assumes this opposition to the whole of capital and therefore becomes aware that it is part of one and the same worldwide movement, aiming to abolish capital and the state. When we say “we”, we refer not only to our small formal group, but also to the organized revolutionary minorities that struggle, against the current, for the constitution of the proletariat as a class, and thus as a party at world level, and are not afraid to claim it, against the trends of opinion and eternal inventors of “neo” who pretend it is “has been”.

What is developed here is at the same time a centralization of the debate growing among these revolutionary minorities, which, through their action, and whether poorly or well coordinated, from Albania to Bolivia, from Russia to Iran, fight to affirm the unique strength of the worldwide proletariat. To denounce social democracy, as we do in this text, in any assembly or on the barricades, belongs to this same struggle community. So does the criticism without concessions of activism and centrism provided by our comrades all over the world.

This doesn't prevent us to put forward positive watchwords to participate in the gestation process of the leadership the proletariat needs. What is to be done, then, to impulse the reunification of the proletariat and its rupture with social democracy? Where will the qualitative leap forward come from?

In principle, it can appear anywhere. The geographic generalization of a movement, as it happened in Iraq some years ago, or more recently in Albania or Ecuador, can be decisive. If those movements didn't spread out more, it is because of the incapacity of the proletariat in other parts of the world to identify to them and going the same way. Yet, in times characterized by the non-existence of permanent proletarian associations at a world level, only centralization and coordination between the communist minorities in the insurgent regions and the ones from other parts of the world

can provide a continuity to the movement and tend to unify its leadership.

This means that, even in the present situation, the conscious and voluntary action of the revolutionary minorities will be decisive. Let's focus on what they have to do.

In concrete terms, do we have to impulse these massive displacements to the summits and counter-summits in order to “confront capital and the state” or, on the contrary do we have to get organized in some other way and impulse another perspective?

We recognize our own movement in this movement of rupture against the summits and counter-summits, but within it, and considering all that has been previously said, we defend the necessity to organize *outside and against* them, and to build our strength in another way, on some other dates, with a total organizational and political autonomy with regards to the left-wing and the right-wing of the system. But, one would ask, how to internationalise the movement, then? How to unify the struggle if it isn't by concentrating all our forces in one determined spot and time?

Despite the criticism expressed up to here, we consider these attempts to organize the minorities for direct action as fundamental, even if they are now only associated to the summits and counter-summits. In this movement, we defend perspectives of a much stronger demarcation in regards to the program and the action. We defend the perspective of deciding the time and place of the proletarian confrontation against capital, affirming that we belong to one and the same class with the same enemy wherever we stand, as originally on the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> of May! And we shall battle until we achieve that again! By the way, we note that several groups and organizations in rupture against the sterile and counter-productive activism already object to “*all going to such and such city, on such and such day*” and propose a different pattern of organization, without depending on the summits schedule.

The thing is, all this needs to be associated with a total rupture against the activist show staged during the summits and counter-summits. We have to refuse to “*show to the poor and moribund proletarians*”, via television, that “*here in Europe, there are*

*courageous people*”, as the trade unionists claim. We cannot endorse this separation, with “*the moribund*” on one side and “*those who know*” on the other. We cannot endorse this dualism between “*those who are helpless*” and “*the activists*” who stage a fight on the occasion of some spectacular gathering.

*On the contrary, in every action, we defend the necessity to organize everywhere in the world, we assert that action can take place, and develop, in places where no summit will ever be held, and no counter-summit summoned by social democracy. Direct action is in total opposition with the show logic. The show features actors and paralyzes spectators, who mostly applaud. It stages a spectacular confrontation between repression specialists and social change specialists. As for the direct action of the proletarian vanguard, it aims being replicated everywhere.*

*In this sense, the qualitative leap forward resides mainly in the rupture with the solidarity concept, which in reality and fundamentally, expresses charity and originates in the Judaeo-Christian ideology: we act in favour of the poor and moribund who live on the other side of the planet. Facing that, we have to claim clearly, that what we do is not aimed at the “poor people of the world”; we do it because we are all and everywhere exploited and oppressed by the same social system, because we have all and everywhere the same interests and the same enemy, because we are all the same flesh, the same historic struggle of the exploited against all systems of exploitation and oppression. The social revolution is a necessity of the world proletariat and not of such and such activist group.*



We have nothing to show off, certainly not on TV or on Internet (even if we use both as communication means). On the contrary, we must act in a way that can be perfectly reproduced by the proletariat wherever it stands.

*If we, together with the militants and revolutionaries who today define themselves through their struggle against capital and are aware of the historic importance of the rupture with social democracy, if we concentrate our forces in time and not in space, rather than cramming into the summit and counter-summit circus, it could constitute a decisive advance for the movement. Because, indeed, we consider it more relevant, stronger and more effective than sending "everybody" in such or such city.*

*Because it is coherent with direct action and impels its development everywhere, we put forward the need to coordinate the times of actions in all countries, against the same objectives. In several places, there is already an embryonic revolutionary tendency to do so. In Spain, for instance, in the so-called "days of social struggle" or "anti-capitalist days", a minority tendency finds an expression, that seeks to define other objectives, establish a different schedule, and develop other forms of struggle beyond the opposition to the summits or the activist show.*

*But the necessary qualitative leap forward will be done when the intensity of the struggle that nowadays occurs exclusively on the occasion of the summits and counter-summits demonstrations, will assume itself as part of one and the same movement, wherever it rises, Ecuador, Albania, Indonesia or anywhere else. This qualitative leap forward will consist in being able, when in the future other expressions of this movement break out, to concentrate our forces to affirm our solidarity. Not a fake solidarity, for the show, not a demonstration that we here do things for the "moribund" proletarians over there. On the contrary, by gaining strength everywhere, by*

*generalizing the proletarian movement that unfolds in one country, by descending onto the streets and confronting the bourgeoisie and the state that stands against us. Through that, we shall state in practice that we are one and the same movement of abolition of the bourgeois society, that we have the same objectives as those for which the proletarians are currently fighting against the bourgeois social system in such or such country.*

*Indeed, as we often repeated, the dramatic aspect of the proletarian explosions that occur in different parts of the world, in different countries and different languages, is precisely their isolation. This isolation allows the worldwide bourgeoisie to continue to attack the proletariat bit-by-bit, country-by-country. When proletarian responses strike violently, this isolation prevents proletarians from other countries to be aware of the struggle of their class brothers. We insist on the fact that it is the worldwide bourgeoisie, which attacks the proletariat in every country. It is the weakness of the proletarian action in, for instance, the European countries and the USA that allowed the NATO to intervene*

*unhindered, without triggering any consistent revolutionary defeatism, to disarm and repress the insurgent proletariat in Albania. The worst thing is that, because of the dominant ideology, all this proletarian force that finds an expression during the summits and counter-summits, is unaware that our strength is also there, in things like what happened in Albania, and that, here and now, it could be possible to prevent the isolation of the proletariat while under the assault of all the combined forces of the bourgeoisie.*

*The fundamental aspect of the struggle against the summits and counter-summits' circus, is that numerous proletarians get organized to confront worldwide capitalism, that they manage to gather their forces and strike the same enemy at the same time. It is that there are minorities that in the name of the revolution descend onto the streets to claim proletarian internationalism and that again the how and what is to be done start to be discussed. The important, is that the central questions of the proletarian struggle, the destruction of capitalism and the state, the revolutionary strategy are again a matter for polemic.*

But we are still unable to direct this force that we managed to concentrate; we are still unable to prevent the carrot and the stick to liquidate the movement in such and such country, by submitting to a cruel and pathetic isolation.

Let us use this force that has the power to demonstrate, to smash, to strike at the bourgeoisie and the state in every country, let us make it coincide with the movements that rise in different places and therefore prevent its isolation, let us in those battle brandish the revolutionary banner of the unification of the struggle against capital, let us globalise reality and the consciousness of our movement, let us develop the unique force of the international proletariat.



**Let us assume this historic tendency of the proletariat  
to reconstitute and to recognize itself as a class,  
to affirm its revolutionary program,  
to constitute itself as a force,  
as a worldwide party  
for the destruction of capitalism.**

**July 2001**

# Empire

by Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri

or

## the modern hiccups of old revisionism

Dear comrades, dear readers, you might not be aware of it, but we have done you a big favour: we read “Empire”, the stodgy book by Negri and Hardt, which some “anti-globalisation” militants have already turned into their bible. Heavy, philosophical, and speculative, boring and irritating, very *trendy* and, above all, completely counterrevolutionary, this big book obviously strives to become one of the guidebooks of the anti-globalisation struggles. In a few paragraphs, this is what Negri & Hardt tell us.

*The modern epoch is over. Verdun, Nazism, Hiroshima, Vietnam, Sabra and Shatila... such modernity has come to the end, and is outdated. Globalisation has put an end to the power of the nation-state that was responsible for imperialist wars and we should be happy about it. We have entered the era of post-modernism.*

*With the end of colonial regimes, and above all with the fall of the USSR and barriers that the latter opposed to the worldwide capitalist market, we witnessed globalisation of economical and cultural exchanges. Substituting the nation-state, a new form of sovereignty, a new political subject appeared: the Empire. It doesn't refer specifically to the United States even though that country plays a key role in the Empire and it doesn't mean imperialism either. “The United States does not, and indeed no nation-state can today, form the center of an imperialist project. Imperialism is over. No nation will be world leader in the way modern European nations*

*were.”<sup>1</sup> It is a “de-territorialised” power that extends to all social life. “(...) Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers.”*

*Contrary to the traditional left-wing that is not particularly keen on this globalisation and would like to hinder circulation of capital, Negri and his colleague Hardt are not opposed to the globalisation of relations, for them, the enemy is “a specific regime of global relations that we call Empire,” but “(...) the fact that against the old powers of Europe a new Empire has formed is only good news. Who wants to see any more of that pallid and parasitic European ruling class that led directly from the ancien régime to nationalism, from populism to fascism, and now pushes for a generalized neoliberalism? Who wants to see more of those ideologies and those bureaucratic apparatuses that have nourished and abetted the rotting European élites? And who can still stand those systems of labor organization and those corporations that have stripped away every vital spirit?”* Contrary to what the traditional left-wing says, the Empire is therefore a positive reality that “does away with the cruel regimes of modern power” and renders the organisation of counter-powers by levelling reality everywhere, making it ever more *supranational*. The Empire makes the alternative possible,

better, it creates it: the Empire is nothing but “*the fabric of an ontological human dimension that tends to be universal.*” That human being expresses itself in the “*resistances, struggles and desires*” of a “*new proletariat*”, a new subject: “*the multitude*”. “*The creative forces of the multitude that sustains the Empire are also capable of autonomously constructing a counter-Empire, an alternative political organization of global flows and exchanges. The struggles to contest and subvert the Empire, as well as those to construct a real alternative, will thus take place on the imperial terrain itself - indeed, such new struggles have already begun to emerge. Through these struggles and many more, the multitude will have to invent new democratic forms and a new constituent power that will one day take us through and beyond Empire.*”

★

One of the historical characteristics of reformism is to start from revolutionary terminology and concepts in

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1. We decided not to bother our readers with precise numbers of pages, as we definitely don't consider “Empire” as a book to be read. Nevertheless all the quotations we use in this text come from: Hardt, M., Negri, A.: “Empire”, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, Harvard University Press, 2000; and can be found there. The PDF version can be downloaded from: <http://www.infoshop.org/texts/empire.pdf>



order to subsequently redefine them and drain them of their subversive substance. The philosophical-sociological soup that Negri & Hardt try to sell to the anti-globalisation sympathisers is no exception to the rule: they call themselves communists, they criticise traditional left-wing, claim allegiance to the “class struggle’s school”, quote K. Marx at every opportunity, refer to Engels, Lenin, Debord or Foucault,

### One of the historical characteristics of reformism is to start from revolutionary terminology and concepts in order to subsequently redefine them and drain them of their subversive substance.

describe capitalist society and talk about variable capital, value, real and formal subsumption, internationalism... but in the end, the fundamental points of the communist programme, those that express the qualitative step between capitalism and communism have vanished; no organisation in force, no dictatorship of the proletariat, no abolition of value, no revolution. Every concept they use is disguised as a simple programmatical extension, a development due to the movements of history, however, with a closer look, it becomes obvious they underwent such political deviancy that their original revolutionary content was entirely devoid of its substance.

*From the very beginning of the book, the authors lay their cards on the table. They start with recounting some aspects of capitalism history and of class struggle and they try to demonstrate the current omnipotence of capital on all aspects of life, but this description of capitalist dictatorship immediately turns into a conventional reproduction of the ruling ideology. So, in the wake of the ideologies that try to sell to the proletariat “a new means of struggle” or “new exploitation conditions”, the Negri-Hardt couple endeavours to portray the present symptoms of capitalist development (monopoly tendencies, fall of the protectionist barriers, strengthening of the free-exchange fraction, increased centralisation of the means of repression, etc.) as a new age of capitalism: globalised capitalism.*

Where we see nothing but the continuity of the capital’s encroachments, the crisis intensification, the progress of capitalist barbarity, Negri and Hardt sing along with all those who hope to serve us at all cost the same old capitalist shit in a new tureen. According to them as well as to Bernstein almost a century ago, there is a “new capitalism”, globalisation. Of course they claim they criticise this “new age” but

the fact is that from the very start they leave the way open for justifications and revision of the proletarian tasks. According to the authors, the new era that is opening –globalisation- calls the proletariat to new tasks. This will lead them, through a series of “Marxist” reasoning and developments, to a total revision on the issue of the destruction of the state.

*But let’s not go too fast. This terminological stowage to globalisation, to the present bourgeois ideology, is only a starter. It would never pique the interest of the social democrat intelligentsia hanging about the anti-globalisation movement, if it was not accompanied by some new modernity. We shall skip the passage on the change from modern to post-modern epoch, (let us however point out the gem defining the Empire as a positive reality that “does away with the cruel regimes of modern power” and not forget the so new symptom of a so-called “renewed interest in and effectiveness of the concept of bellum justum, or ‘just war,’” supposed to be specific to the Empire, as if every imperialist war didn’t try to define itself that way). We shall now deal with the authors’ vision of the present struggles.*

For them, the present struggles “under the Empire” determine “not the appearance of a new cycle of internationalist struggles, but rather the emergence of a new quality of social movements”. It is logical: if there is a new capitalism, there must be a new quality of social movements! As always, using the excuse of a new situation, today is disconnected from yesterday by defining “new” characteristics of the present struggles, by giving them a “new” quality, by assigning other tasks to the “new

proletariat”, to the “multitude”. In this context, all that relates to the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of past struggles becomes irrelevant to the nature and the quality of the present day struggles. Today, no more internationalist struggles (because they would no longer communicate horizontally, they would directly and vertically attack the summit –the Empire- and blah blah blah). Instead, “radically different, biopolitical movements” (economic, political and cultural, in the authors’ jargon) determined by a “new” composition of the proletariat and by the appearance of a “new” subject: the multitude and its desires.

*“The composition of the proletariat has transformed and thus our understanding of it must too. In conceptual terms we understand proletariat as a broad category that includes all those whose labor is directly or indirectly exploited by and subjected to capitalist norms of production and reproduction. In a previous era the category of the proletariat centered on and was at times effectively subsumed under the industrial working class, whose paradigmatic figure was the male mass factory worker. That industrial working class was often accorded the leading role over other figures of labor (such as peasant labor and reproductive labor) in both economic analyses and political movements. (...) We need to look more concretely at the form of the struggles in which this new proletariat expresses its desires and needs.”*

Let us point out that although the “new” subject –the multitude- hasn’t been introduced yet, we are already up to the neck in the social democrat conception of social classes. The proletariat isn’t described with regards to its movement, in its antagonism against the bourgeoisie, to capital; neither it is defined according to its project, its history, its party, and its struggles. The proletariat remains a mere static object to be analysed in its immobility and its immediacy, in the same way as it is pictured by the whole of social democracy, just as Stalinism conceives it. According to Negri, the central role is now played by the modern immaterial labour workers vis à vis the industrial workers of old, and their characteristics are to be “studied”. Of course, the sociology of this

new “central” exploited determines new tasks and new goals.

Therefore, the authors resort to the concept of proletariat (in a static and twisted way) but they do so only in order to end up putting forth its opposite: the multitude. And so, from one thing leading to another, starting with the exploited worker and the internationalist proletarian, jumping from the industrial

proportional to the lack of “real novelty” contained in this umpteenth reformist plea for a “world of cooperation”. The same old symptoms of the discoverers resurface “new phases”, “new philosophies”, “new subjects”: recuperation of all sorts of historical references, description of this world of misery and repression, appeal to submit to the trendy reformist movements, prediction about a world on

political project? We cannot say at this point.”

A real chef d’œuvre: 265 pages of “radical thinking” to admit that they have no idea of the “specific and concrete practices that will animate this political project”... A confession of powerlessness released with such a cheek that it would make any politician publicly commenting the employment perspectives turn green with envy!

Of course, it is not completely true, because a good reformist must put forward one or another concrete perspective, and if one manages to get over the disappointment induced by this confession of powerlessness, he is nonetheless quickly given some leads. Negri and Hardt got together to be stronger in their propositions and they kept the best part for the end: “What we can see nonetheless is a first element of a political program for the global multitude, a first political demand: global citizenship.”

*And there it goes! For those who might still have doubts about the counterrevolutionary, self-managementist, intentions of the authors, all becomes clear now. Negri & Hardt demand an identity card for all, they urge to request from every state a juridical acknowledgement of migrations, they encourage the multitude to demand control over the migratory movements (sic), etc. “The general right to control its own movement is the multitude’s ultimate demand for global citizenship.”* If you didn’t understand everything, don’t worry, neither did the authors! The important thing is to show to which point, beyond the realm of good philosophical intentions, highbrow Marxism doesn’t have to envy the utmost vulgar reformism. Bill Clinton demands “a universal health care card”, Toni Negri wants residency permits for everyone, which means “*in the first place that all should have the full rights of citizenship in the country where they live and work.*”

*Let us quickly leaf through the labour issue, this “fundamental creative activity of the multitude” and through the right for a “social wage and a guaranteed income for all”! Let us say no more. In fact we can skip it all and rush to the conclusions of the book to get a straight idea of up to where these Marxologists and other philosophers lead us.*

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labour force to the immaterial one, they finally arrive at the multitude: “*Does that same uncontainable desire for freedom that broke and buried the nation-state and that determined the transition toward Empire still live beneath the ashes of the present, the ashes of the fire that consumed the internationalist proletarian subject that was centered on the industrial working class? What has come to stand in the place of that subject? In what sense can we say that the ontological rooting of a new multitude has come to be a positive or alternative actor in the articulation of globalization?*” (...) “*Far from being defeated, the revolutions of the twentieth century have each pushed forward and transformed the terms of class conflict, posing the conditions of a new political subjectivity, an insurgent multitude against imperial power.*” This is how, while fiercely professing the “school of class struggle” and the existence of the proletariat, they take the slippery slope of the “new capitalist conditions” to gently slide down to the “new tasks” and finally, after passing through the “new political subjectivity”, they end up with the dissolution of the proletariat into the multitude. Sorry, the “new” multitude!

The way Negri-Hardt insist on affixing the word “new” to every concept and the frequency with which this adjective appears in every page of the book are

the verge of collapse... and in the end, no concrete means, no perspectives, no concrete directions for action.

Chapters and chapters about the “world order”, the “decline of nation-state”, the “American sovereignty and the new empire”, the “capitalist sovereignty or the administration of global society” and, when at last, at the end of the book, perspectives are announced... nothing, emptiness!

*But let us rather admire the masterpiece: “It is a matter of recognizing and engaging the imperial initiatives and not allowing them continually to reestablish order; it is a matter of crossing and breaking down the limits and segmentations that are imposed on the new collective labor power [another “newness”!], it is a matter of gathering together these experiences of resistance and wielding them in concert against the nerve centers of imperial command.”*

After 254 pages of philosophy, the authors finally talk about concrete action, social practice. We get to the crucial moment of the book, at the transition between critical theory and practical action introducing the “What is to be done?” at the qualitative step...

“This task for the multitude, however, although it is clear at a conceptual level, remains rather abstract. What specific and concrete practices will animate this

*Of course, we could wonder if, from the communist point of view, all this is really worth reading, analysing and criticising. Some elements of the Negri-Hardt programme are so ridiculous this is certainly a legitimate question. But with "Empire", Negri and Hardt specifically target the radical fringe of the anti-globalisation movement: the philosophy of the book is designed to meet needs of certain radicality at work within the anti-globalisation movement.*

**But with "Empire", Negri and Hardt specifically target the radical fringe of the anti-globalisation movement: the philosophy of the book is designed to meet needs of certain radicality at work within the anti-globalisation movement.**

It is precisely when the proletariat will try to break away from the pacifist and/or anti-organizational ideologies that pollute this milieu, it's at the very moment when the qualitative step that will make the struggle against capitalism operational will be at stake, that the ideology of "the Empire and the multitude" will play the role of a rampart and prevent the development and the generalisation of further ruptures. The purpose of flattering the "anti-globalisation movement" is to submit it to its own weaknesses, to ensnare it into a merely spectacular critique of capitalism, a critique fed by ideas as well *organised and responsible as the demonstrations in which they express themselves. That is to say a "critique" that never takes action.*

*The "radical" ideologies that tomorrow will hamper or even paralyse the anti-capitalist movement are being shaped today. So, when the proletariat will show its will to assault private property, they will come up with things like: it is no longer necessary because "producing increasingly means constructing cooperation and communication commonalities" and in this sense, "the concept of private property itself (...) becomes increasingly nonsensical..."; it is "the community that produces and that, while producing, is reproduced and redefined" even if "the juridical and*

*political regimes of private property" have not been eliminated yet and "private property, despite its juridical powers, cannot help becoming an ever more abstract and transcendental concept and thus ever more detached from reality."* And there you have it! Given that private property does not exist anymore (or nearly so), our action can be of two kinds: become aware and bring to the multitude the awareness that private property has disappeared, and

then demand the resignation of the empty shells –the political and juridical regimes- that support it.

*"(...) today we participate in a more radical and profound commonality than has ever been experienced in the history of capitalism. (...)*

*Our economic and social reality is defined by (...) co-produced services and relationships."* Given that we live in co-operation, communication and community, all we have to do is to discover that we are the real masters of the world. It is simple, it's all written down: *"The Empire pretends to be the master of that world because it can destroy it. What a horrible illusion! In reality we are masters of the world because our desire and labour regenerate it continuously. (...) In biopolitical society the decision of the sovereign can never negate the desire of the multitude."*

The revolutionary violence, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the organization of our class as a force are written off! No need for them, since we already are the masters of the world, and the power is incapable of denying our desires. The millions of proletarians who are dying of hunger and anguish around the world will surely be very happy to hear this! As they were just beginning to cast serious doubts on the capitalists' ability to heed their desires, Negri arrives, to dispel their fears.

*But Negri goes even further: he tries to recuperate Marx's watchword about the destruction of the State by amalgamating it with a claim for self-government. Of course, we have never imagined Negri as an enemy of the State; besides, he clarified this point*

publicly on several occasions. But the revision he makes here is absolutely remarkable: he manages to have Marx say exactly the opposite of what he meant, by some good old revisionist trick! It is almost as funny as the banknotes of the former "socialist countries", which displayed Marx's face on them. Just check it out: Negri & Hardt tell us that the "Big government is over". First they insist on the fact that they disagree with the way the "American conservatives" used those terms to mock the "democrats". They nevertheless specify that *"Certainly, having been educated in class struggle, we know well that big government has also been an instrument for the redistribution of social wealth and that, under the pressure of working class struggle, it has served in the fight for equality and democracy."* Good old social democrat theory, according to which the state isn't the organisation of the ruling class as a force but a mere neutral tool that can be used by any class of the society. No comments! But Negri goes even further: this epoch is over. The big socialist and communist governments led to the concentration camps... By reminding us that, 150 years ago, Marx already denounced that all past revolutions had only improved the state rather than destroyed it, Negri explains that the current mode of economical organisation renders the assault against the state obsolete, useless, and that the only possibility lies in "labour power constituting itself as a government"... which he defines as destruction of the state. That's it! *"No, we are not anarchists but communists who have seen how much repression and destruction of humanity has been wrought by liberal and socialist big governments. We have seen how all this being re-created in imperial government, just when the circuits of productive cooperation have made labour power as a whole capable of constituting itself in government."* The Negri-Hardt theories have eliminated any reference to revolutionary violence, to the proletariat organization as a force, to the assault on private property... and they now equate the government of their yearning (a government of global citizenship, of active democracy) to the destruction of the state!

You can see right through it. But we have now come full cycle and can presently sum up again the idea of the book: "Empire" seeks, throughout its chapters, to portray the world as unified, globalised, subsumed



by an imperial order that exerts its control everywhere and nowhere at the same time. In that world, all the levels of its constituting pyramid take part in its reproduction. The Empire extends its domination over all aspects of social life, but on the other side “life, desire, community” express themselves everywhere. Labour is production of life. NGOs, for instance, transform politics into an issue, which concerns generic life and they extend their action on the whole of the biopolitical space. “Here, at this broadest, most universal level, the activities of these NGOs coincide with the workings of Empire ‘beyond politics,’ on the terrain of biopower, meeting the needs of life itself.”

The Empire extends its kingdom beyond the nation-state, beyond politics, everywhere and upon everything but it cannot prevent the development of forces developing generic life, and its sovereigns are constrained to obey to the desires of the multitude. Empire and multitude are two coinciding realities. Property has a mere juridical existence. Everything belongs to the community. Little more is needed to move on to another world. We are close to the conclusion. How? In a peaceful way, and of course, not by seeking to take the “command”, but by self-organising as a government.

Will the chapter on militancy be more explicit?

*“We should say right away that this new militancy does not simply repeat the organizational formulas of the old revolutionary working class.”* Well, we were sure expecting something like a “new” militancy! *“Militants resist imperial command in*

*a creative way. In other words, resistance is linked immediately with a constitutive investment in the biopolitical realm and to the formation of cooperative apparatuses of production and community.”* Did we hear “communisation”? Did we hear “self management”?

“There is an ancient legend that might serve to illuminate the future life of communist militancy: that of Saint Francis of Assisi. (...) To denounce the poverty of the multitude he adopted that common condition and discovered there the ontological power of a new society. The communist militant does the same...”

Let us mingle with the anti-globalisation sympathisers, with the NGO’s sisters, let us work hand in hand with the cooperation priests...

“Once again in postmodernity we find ourselves in Francis’s situation, posing against the misery of power the joy of being. This is a revolution that no power will control - because biopower and communism, cooperation and revolution remain together, in love, simplicity, and also innocence. This is the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist.”

Amen!

In the end, a lot of abstractions, and a lot of religion, to worship the present world. Just as Bernstein revealed what social democracy was doing “silently” when claiming “aloud” that violent revolution was an outdated idea, Negri describes the immediate reality of the so-called anti-globalisation movement (in fact, the social democrat “anti-globalisation” practise and

ideology operating within the proletarian movements that attack capitalism). He puts into words and perspectives the movement’s most reformist content (NGOs, the ideology of cooperation, pacifism, charity...), flirts with its self-management tendencies, praises its worst weaknesses and finally sells the image of its own misery: lack of revolutionary subject, exaltation of the “refusal”, pacifism, ideology of conscience-bringing, self-management and self-government, Consequence: his book is an excellent theorization of the reformism present in today’s movements.

No revolutionary action, the monopoly of violence surrendered into the hands of the state, no attack against private property, value, no confrontation with the antagonist class, no organization... just a bit of NGOs, a bit of claiming for a worldwide citizenship and a real democracy, a bit of confused ethics and philosophy, a bit of love for the multitude, a bit of commiseration and a lot, an awful lot of idealism and self management.

*In short, we started with a denunciation of the reinforcement of the capitalist control over the human beings and we ended up with a claim for “an organization of productive and political power as a biopolitical unity managed by the multitude, organized by the multitude, directed by the multitude - absolute democracy in action.”*

In the most genuine populist tradition of left-wing capitalism and Stalinism (which the authors claim they reject), they started from the proletariat and ended up denying its historical role and praising its dissolution into a peaceful and democratic multitude.



## GREECE

### "MERRY CRISIS AND HAPPY NEW FEAR!"

(one of the insurgents' mottos in Athens end of December 2008)

Just when we were finishing this review important events took place in Greece. Following the murder of a youngster by cops in Athens thousands of proletarians took to the streets in dozens of cities and clashed with the police. For several weeks, universities, high schools, public buildings, radio and television stations, trade-union premises... have been occupied. All sectors of the proletariat took part in this movement and developed its community of struggle and class associationism.

For lack of a more complete analysis of these struggles we publish here some texts and statements coming from proletarians in rupture with capital's law and order. Some of these texts express the refusal of democracy, its parties and unions, and reaffirm the perspective of the classless society, without boss, without State, i.e. the perspective of Communism.

#### An Open Letter to Students by Workers in Athens

December 16<sup>th</sup> 2008

Our age difference and the general estrangement make it difficult for us to discuss with you in the streets; this is why we send you this letter.

Most of us have not (yet) been bald or big-bellied. We are part of the 1990-91 movement. You must have heard of it. Back then, and while we had occupied our schools for 30-35 days, fascists killed a teacher because he had gone beyond his natural role (that of being our guard) and crossed the line to the opposite side; he had come with us, into our struggle. Then, even the toughest of us got to the streets and riot. However, we didn't even think of doing what you easily do today: attack police stations (although we sang "burn police stations...").

So, you're gone beyond us, as always happens in history. Conditions are different of course. During '90s they passed us off the prospect of personal success and some of us swallowed it. Now people cannot believe this fairy tale. Your older brothers showed us this during the 2006-07 students' movement; you now spit their fairy tale to their faces.

So far so good.

Now the good and difficult matters begin.

We'll tell you what we've learned from our struggles and our defeats (because as long as world is not ours we'll always be the defeated ones) and you can use what we've learned as you wish:

Don't stay alone. Call us; call as many people as possible. We don't know how you can do that, you will find the way. You've already occupied your schools and you tell us that the most important reason is that you don't like your schools. Nice. Since you've already occupied them change their role. Share your occupations with other people. Let your schools become the first buildings to house our new relations. Their most powerful weapon is dividing us. Just like you are not afraid of attacking their police stations because you are together, don't be afraid to call us to change our life all together.

Don't listen to any political organization (either anarchists or anyone). Do what you need to. Trust people, not abstract schemes and ideas. Trust your direct relations with people. Trust your friends; make as many people as possible in your struggle your people. Don't listen to them when they're saying that your struggle doesn't have a political content and must seemingly obtain. Your struggle is the content. You only have your struggle and it's in your hands to preserve its advance. It's only your struggle that can change your life, namely you and the real relations with your fellowmen.

Don't be afraid to proceed when confronting new things. Each one of us, as we're getting older, has things planted in their brains. You too, although you are young. Don't forget the importance of this fact.

Back in 1991, we confronted the smell of the new world and, trust us, we found it difficult. We learned that there must always be limits. Don't be scared by the destruction of commodities. Don't be scared by people looting stores. We make all these, they are ours. You (just like we in the past) are raised to get up every morning in order to make things that they will later not be yours. Let's get them back all together and share them. Just like we share our friends and the love among us.

We apologize for writing this letter quickly, but we do it swinging the lead from our work, secretly from our boss. We are imprisoned in work, just like you are imprisoned in school.

We'll now lie to our boss and leave work: we'll come to meet you in Syntagma sq with stones in our hands.

Proletarians

## INVITATION TO THE OPEN POPULAR ASSEMBLY OF THE LIBERATED CITY HALL OF AGHIOS DIMITRIOS

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the special guard Epaminondas Korkoneas pulled out his gun and murdered a citizen, a 16-year old kid. The rage that everyone feels is huge, despite all the attempts by the government and the mass media to disorient public opinion.

It is now certain that this insurrection is not only homage to the unjust loss of Alexandros Grigoropoulos. There has been a lot of talk since then about violence, thefts and pillages. For those in the media and power, violence is only what destroys the proper order.

**For us however:**

**Violence is** to work 40 years for crumbs and to wonder if you will ever retire.

**Violence is** the bonds, the stolen pensions, the securities fraud.

**Violence is** to be forced to take a housing loan that you will pay back through the nose.

**Violence is** the managerial right of the employer to fire you at will.

**Violence is** unemployment, temporary employment, 700 euros a monthii.

**Violence is** the "industrial accidents" because the bosses cut costs at the expense of worker safety.

**Violence is** to take psycho-medications and vitamins to withstand the exhaustive work schedule.

**Violence is** to be an immigrant, to live with the fear that you can be thrown out of the country at any time and to be in a state of constant insecurity.

**Violence is** to be simultaneously a wage worker, a housewife, and a mother.

**Violence is** to be worked to death and then to be told "smile, we are not asking that much of you."

The insurrection of high-school and university students, of temporary workers and immigrants broke this violence of normality. This insurrection must not stop! Syndicalists, political parties, priests, journalists and businesspeople do whatever they can to maintain the violence we described above.

It is not just them, but we too are responsible for the perpetuation of this situation. The insurrection opened a space where we can finally express ourselves freely. As a continuation of this opening we went forward with the occupation of the City Hall of Ag. Dimitrios and the formation of a popular assembly open to all.

**An open space for communication,  
to break our silence,  
to undertake action for our life.**

**Saturday December 13 2008, 7:00pm,  
open popular assembly  
at the Ag. Dimitrios city hall.**

**NO PROSECUTION – IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF  
ALL THOSE ARRESTED**

OCCUPATION OF AG. DIMITRIOS CITY HALL



**The State murders.  
Your silence arms them.**

**Occupations in all  
public buildings, now.**

**Occupation of the Town Hall of Agios Dimitrios.**





## WE DESTROY THE PRESENT BECAUSE WE COME FROM THE FUTURE

“Ôhe first dawning light comes out of the deepest darkness»

Up until the Saturday night of 06/12/08 we could say that “jusqu’ici tout va bien”, watching everyone’s personal fall into the desert of the capitalist system. Then the crash came, and the destructive madness seized large parts of the youth of the country. At first, like so many times in history, it was the actions that did the talking. First the cop gun talked, shouting in the crudest manner the repulsion of Authority of every kind toward the phenomenon of life. The blood of a teenager was spilt, and immediately another cry instantly transmitted from Exarchia to the economic center of the metropolis and other big cities, a cry made out of collapsing glass and flames, transforming banks and malls into a raging cloud with the inscription: REVENGE.

Two days later the christmas centers of the cities looked as if they had been the targets of war bombing, while the already crisis-ridden economy took another deadly blow in its heart by hordes of “hooligans” looting commodities. “The Varkiza Treaty is broken, we are at war again”. We are talking about the return of class struggle to the foreground, we are talking about the solution to the crisis: For us. And we’re only getting started. Let’s go...

**We are part of the revolt of life against the daily death the existing social relations impose on us.** With the destructive power that was latent in us we realize a wild (but contradictory) attack on the institution of private property. We occupy the streets, we breathe freely despite the tear gas, attacking the most despicable image of ourselves: the image of ourselves as the bosses’ slaves, that in its most extreme, most repugnant form is the cop. We erect a steadfast barricade against the loathsome normality of the cycle of production and distribution. In the current conjunction, nothing is more important than consolidating this barricade against the class enemy. Even if we retreat under the pressure of the (para-) state scum and the insufficiency of the barricade, we all know that nothing will ever be the same in our lives.

We also position ourselves in the historical conjunction of the recomposition of a new class subject, that carries from long ago the promise of assuming the role of the gravedigger of the capitalist system. We believe that **the proletariat was never a class because of its position; on the contrary, it constitutes itself as a class for itself on the ground of the clash with the bosses**, first acting and only later gaining consciousness of its actions. The recomposition is taking place by groups of subjects that become aware that they have no control over their own lives, from groups that have been -or are getting- squeezed on the bottom of the barrel, and are now entering a contradictory trajectory toward unification.

Wage work has always been a blackmail. Nowadays this holds even more, as the number of workers that are employed only circumstantially and precariously in sectors which, while necessary for the reproduction of capitalist domination have no social usefulness whatsoever, is also growing. **In these sectors, class struggles, exiled from the field of self-management of production, move into the field of the generalized blocking and sabotage.** Simultaneously, the automatization of production

and the abandonment of the politics of full employment create whole reserve armies of jobless proletarians who are pushed to the fringes of society and resort to insecure labor or turn to crime economy in order to survive. Jobless, precarious workers, highschool and university students destined to become future wage slaves, migrant workers of the first and second generation that daily live the marginalization and the repression constituted along with radical workers’ minorities the **community of the insurgents of December**, a community based on the common condition of alienation and exploitation that defines a society based on commodity-work. Let’s remind ourselves that **the eve of this feast-day was celebrated from those even lower, from those who have lost every joy in the places of torment of democracy, from the prisoners of the Greek prisons.**

The owners of the commodity labor-power who had it invested in the stock exchange of social security and in the hope of seeing their offspring exiting this condition through social ascension, continue to observe the insurrectionary party without taking part, but also without calling the police to dissolve it. Along with **the substitution of social security with police security and the collapse of the stock market of class movability**, many workers, under the burden of the collapsing universe of petit-bourgeois ideology and the state hybris, are moving toward a (socially important) moral justification of the youth outbreak, but without yet joining the attack against this murderous world.

They kept on dragging their corpse on three-month litanies of the professional unionists and on defending a sad sectional defeatism against the raging class aggressiveness that is rapidly coming to the fore. **These two worlds met up on Monday, 8/12, on the streets, and the entire country caught on fire.** The world of the sectional defeatism took the streets to defend the democratic right of the separated roles of the citizen, the worker, the consumer, to participate in demonstrations without getting shot at. Nearby, not that far away, the world of class aggressiveness took the streets in the form of small organized “gangs” that break, burn, loot, smash the pavements to throw stones onto the murderers. The first world (at least as expressed in the politics of the professional unionists) was so scared by the presence of the second, that on Wednesday, 10/12, attempted to demonstrate without the annoying presence of the “riff-raff”. The dilemma regarding how to be on the streets was already laid in: **Either with the democratic safety of the citizen, or with the clash solidarity of the group, the aggressive block, the march that defends everyone’s existence with sharp attacks and barricades.**

The December events (“Dekemvriana”) of 2008 in Greece are the latest link in a series of insurrections that are sweeping through the capitalist world. **In its decadent phase, capitalist society neither can, nor does it aim at gaining the consent of the exploited through the integration of partial demands. All that remains is repression.** With the restructuring that began in the mid-seventies (to repel the proletarian mutiny that is known as “movement-68”), capital faced the following contradiction: while it had the ability to create a human mass of passive tv-viewers and commodity-consumers, it had to simultaneously refuse them (by lowering their wages) the possibility of buying these commodities. From this point of view, the looting of a mall in Stadiou str. by people who are daily sharing the promises of a false consumer happiness, while being refused the means to realize these promises, shouldn’t come out as a surprise.

The insurrection of December didn't put out any concrete demands, exactly because the participating subjects daily experience, and therefore know the denial of the ruling class to meet any such demand. The wisperings of the left, that initially demanded the removal of the government were replaced by a mute terror and a desperate attempt to relieve the uncontrollable insurrectionary wave. **The absence of any reformist demand whatsoever reflects an underground (but still unconscious) disposition toward a radical subversion and surpassing of the existing commodity relations and the creation of qualitatively new ones.**

Everything begins and matures in violence – but nothing stops there. The destructive violence that unleashed in the events of December caused the blocking of the capitalist normality in the center of the metropolis, a necessary yet insufficient condition for the transforming of the insurrection into an attempt for social liberation. The destabilization of capitalist society is impossible without paralysing the economy – that is, without disrupting the function of the centers of production and distribution, through sabotage, occupations, strikes. **The absence of a positive, creative proposal for a different form of organizing the social relations was –up until now– more than self-evident.** Nevertheless, the insurrection of December must be understood within the historical context of an enlivenment process of class struggle that takes place on the international level.

A series of **struggle practices** – some have surfaced in elementary form in many countries where significant class conflicts took place recently – propose and realize in a germinal level the **human community** that abolishes and creatively transcends the alienated commodity relations: **occupied schools** can be used as regrouping centers to reclaim the streets and the public

space in general; **public anti-lessons** organized within the context of the recent movement of precarious workers/students in Italy, putting knowledge under the service of the **forming community**; **collective appropriations** of supermarkets and bookstores, and the **collective life** in the occupation as a self-fulfillment of the demands for free feeding, housing, books; **the radical contestation of the property relations**, cooperation instead of personal appropriation (and sometimes reselling) of the appropriated commodities; **neighborhood assemblies linking up**, starting from the local issues, prefiguring thus a society where decisions are taken and are executed without the mediation of any separated power whatsoever (sf. Oaxaca); **free transportations** with the public transportation, the *déménages* (invading into employment agencies and throwing all their stuff into the street) as were systematically made during the anti-CPE movement in France. These (and countless others, that can be born out of the personal and collective intelligence) are the practises that can enrich and fertilize the powers of negation, so that through the turmoil of insurrection, the **free, communist society** will start to take shape.

We do everything within our reach not to abandon the occupations and the streets, because we don't want to go home. We get miserable and unhappy with the "realistic" thought that sooner or later we will have to return to normality. **We get full of joy with the thought that we are in the beginning of a historical process of enlivenment of class struggle**, and that if we want to, if we fight for it, if we believe in it, it can lead us out of the crisis, into the revolutionary getaway from the system.

Proletarians from the occupied ASOEE  
December 18<sup>th</sup> 2008



## THEIR DEMOCRACY MURDERS...

On Saturday December 6, 2008, Alexandros Grigoropoulos, a 15-year old comrade, was murdered in cold blood, with a bullet in the chest by the cop Epaminondas Korkoneas of the special guards' police force in the area of Exarchia.

Contrary to the statements of politicians and journalists who are accomplices to the murder, this was not an "isolated incident", but an explosion of the state repression which systematically and in an organised manner targets those who resist, those who revolt, the anarchists and antiauthoritarians. It is the peak of state terrorism which is expressed with the upgrading of the role of repressive mechanisms, their continuous armament, the increasing levels of violence they use, with the doctrine of "zero tolerance", with the slandering media propaganda that criminalizes those who are fighting against authority.

It is these conditions that prepare the ground for the intensification of repression, attempting to extract social consent beforehand, and arming the weapons of state murderers in uniform that are targeting the people who fight, the youth, the damned who are revolting in the entire country. Lethal violence against the people in the social and class struggle is aiming at everybody's submission, serving as exemplary punishment, meant to spread fear.

It is the escalation of the generalized attack of the state and the bosses against the whole of society, in order to impose more rigid conditions of exploitation and oppression, to consolidate control and repression. An attack that is reflected everyday on poverty, social exclusion, the blackmail to adjust in the world of social and class divisions, the ideological war launched by the dominant mechanisms of manipulation (the mass media). An attack which is raging in every social space, demanding from the oppressed their division and silence. From the schools' cells and the universities to the dungeons of waged slavery with the hundreds of dead workers in the so-called "working accidents" and the poverty embracing large numbers of the population... From the minefields in the borders, the pogroms and the murders of immigrants and refugees to the numerous "suicides" in prisons and police stations... from the "accidental shootings" in police blockades to violent repression of local resistances, Democracy is showing its teeth!

In these conditions of fierce exploitation and oppression, and against the daily looting and pillage that the state and the bosses are launching, taking as spoils the oppressed people's labour force, their life, their dignity and freedom, the accumulated social suffocation is accompanying today the rage erupting in the streets and the barricades for the murder of Alexandros.

From the first moment after the murder of Alexandros, spontaneous demonstrations and riots appear in the centre of Athens, the Polytechnic, the Economic and the Law Schools are being occupied and attacks against state and capitalist targets take place in many different neighbourhoods and in the city centre. Demonstrations, attacks and clashes erupt in Thessaloniki, Patras, Volos, Chania and Heraklion in Crete, in Giannena, Komotini, Xanthi, Serres, Sparti, Alexandroupoli, Mytilini. In Athens, in Patisson Street -outside the Polytechnic and the Economic School- clashes last all night. Outside the Polytechnic the riot police make use of plastic bullets.

On Sunday the 7th December, thousands of people demonstrate towards the police headquarters in Athens, attacking the riot police. Clashes of unprecedented tension spread in the streets of the city centre, lasting until late at night. Many demonstrators are injured and a number of them are arrested.

From Monday morning until today the revolt spreads and becomes generalized. The last days are full of uncountable social events: militant high school students' demonstrations ending up -in many cases- in attacks against police stations and clashes with the cops in the neighbourhoods of Athens and in the rest of the country, massive demonstrations and conflicts between protestors and the police in the centre of Athens, during which there are assaults in banks, big department stores and ministries, siege of the Parliament in Syntagma square, occupations of public buildings, demonstrations ending in riots and attacks against state and capitalist targets in many different cities (...)

The bullets of the murderers in uniform, the arrests and beatings of demonstrators, the chemical gas war launched by the police forces, the ideological attack of Democracy not only cannot manage to impose fear and silence, but they become for the people the reason to raise against state terrorism the cries of the struggle for freedom, to abandon fear and to meet -more and more every day, youth, high school and university students, immigrants, jobless, workers- in the streets of revolt. To let the rage overflow and drown them!

**THE STATE, THE BOSSES, THEIR THUGS  
AND THEIR LACKEYS ARE MOCKING US,  
ROBBING US AND KILLING US!  
LET'S ORGANISE, COUNTER-ATTACK  
AND SMASH THEM!  
THESE NIGHTS BELONG TO ALEXIS!  
CONCENTRATION FOR SOLIDARITY  
TO THE ARRESTED AT EVELPIDON COURTHOUSE:  
MONDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2008, 9am  
IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ALL THE ARRESTED**

We are sending our solidarity to everyone occupying universities, schools and state buildings, demonstrating and clashing with the state murderers all over the country.

We are sending our solidarity to all comrades abroad who are mobilizing, transferring our voice everywhere. In the great battle for global social liberation we stand together!

The Occupation of the Polytechnic University in Athens,  
Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008





## A Bedouin anytime! A citizen never.

Having by our late labours and hazards made it appear to the world at how high a rate we value our just freedom (...) we do now hold our selves bound in mutual duty to each other, to take the best care we can for the future, to avoid the danger of returning into a slavish condition.

- Levellers, An Agreement of the People, 1647

Let's look beyond the tear gas, the baton sticks and the riot police vans: The operation being conducted by the bosses since December 6th doesn't comprise a mere combination of repression and propaganda; rather, it is the application of a series of methods aiming to re-negotiate social peace and consensus.

From the communist party, which views the revolted people as puppets of syryza (the euro-left parliamentary party – transl.) and of cia, all the way to socialist party politicians moaning that Athens resembles a city of the Eastern Block, what with its streets empty from consumers. From the archbishop of Thessaloniki, who begs his flock to go shopping and the city's international exposition offering free parking to Christmas shoppers, they all hold a common target: The return to the normality of democracy and consumption. Thus the day after the revolt, which happens to coincide with a dead consumer feast such as Christmas, is accompanied by the demand that this must be celebrated at all cost: not only in order for some tills to fill up but in order for us all to return to our graves. The day after holds the demand of the living dead that nothing disturbs their eternal sleep no more. It holds a moratorium legitimising the emptiness of their spectacle-driven world, a world of quiet and peaceful life. And the generals of this war hold no weapon that is more lethal than the appeal to that absolute, timeless idea: democracy.

The word-for-democracy, developing as it does ever more densely from the side of the demagogues of calmness, aims at the social imaginary – the collective field of structuring of desires and fears. It aims, in other words, at the field where procedures invisibly take place that can secure or threaten order and its truth. Everyone knew, well before the assassination of Alexis, that the oligarchy of capital had given up on trying even to seem democratic, even by bourgeois terms: economic scandals, blatant incidents of police violence, monstrous laws. Yet this fact is not, neither here nor anywhere else, what might worry the bosses. This is precisely because the constant reproduction of the establishment under such terms ("is it democratic enough? Is it really democratic?") reproduces the capitalist oligarchy that builds around it a wall of scandals, remorse, resignations, demands and reforms – preventing, in this way, the questioning of (not the democratic qualities of the regime but) democracy as a system of social organising. Hence bosses can still appeal to this higher value today, this axiomatic mechanism of the political, in order to bring us back to normality, consensus, compromise. In order to assimilate the general spontaneous rage in the sphere of mediation before this rage can organise itself into a revolutionary potential which would swoop all and any intermediaries and peaceful democrats – bringing along a new form of organising: the commune.

Amidst this ludicrous climate of shallow analyses the salaried officials of the psychological warfare point at the revolted, howling: "That's not democratic, that ignores the rules under which

our democracy functions". We cannot help but momentarily stand speechless in the face of what we would until recently have considered impossible. Even if having the intention to deceive, the bosses of this country have said something true: We despise democracy more than anything else in this decadent world. For what is democracy other than a system of discriminations and coercions in the service of property and privacy? And what are its rules, other than rules of negotiation of the right to own – the invisible rules of alienation? Freedom, rights equality, egalitarianism: all these dead ideological masks together cannot cover their mission: the generalisation and preservation of the social as an economic sphere, as a sphere where not only what you have produced but also what you are and what you can do are already alienated. The bourgeois, with a voice trembling from piety, promise: rights, justice, equality. And the revolted hear: repression, exploitation, looting. Democracy is the political system where everyone is equal in front of the guillotine of the spectacle-product. The only problem that concerned democrats, from Cromwell to Montesquieu, is what form of property is sufficient in order for someone to be recognised as a citizen, what kind of rights and obligations guarantee that they will never understand themselves as something beyond a private citizen. Everything else is no more than adjusting details of a regime in the service of capital.

Our despise for democracy does not derive from some sort of idealism but rather, from our very material animosity for a social entity where value and organising are centered around the product and the spectacle. The revolt was by definition also a revolt against property and alienation. Anyone that didn't hide behind the curtains of their privacy, anyone who was out on the streets, knows it only too well: Shops were looted not for computers, clothes or furniture to be resold but for the joy of destructing what alienates us: the spectacle of the product. Anyone who doesn't understand why someone delights in the sight of a destructed product is a merchant or a cop. The fires that warmed the bodies of the revolted in these long December nights were full of the liberated products of our toil, from the disarmed symbols of what used to be an almighty fantasy. We simply took what belonged to us and we threw it to the fire together with all its co-expressions. The grand potlatch of the past few days was also a revolt of desire against the imposed rule of scarcity. A revolt of the gift against the sovereignty of money. A revolt of the anarchy of use value against the democracy of exchange value. A revolt of spontaneous collective freedom against rationalised individual coercion.

December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008



# PUBLICATIONS



## Central organ of the ICG in French n°60

- Capitalist catastrophe and proletarian struggles
- We received and publish:
  - The democratic reconciliation (Argentina)
  - Hallabja in revolt against Talabani

## Central organ of the ICG in Arabic n°6

- Editorial about the Progress
- General characteristics of the struggles of the present time
- What reduction of working time ?
- They talk to us about peace... they wage war on us!



## Central organ of the ICG in Spanish n°58

- The capitalist catastrophe reaches new summits. Short walk under the black sun of capital
- Capitalist catastrophe and proletarian struggles -First part-

## Central organ of the ICG in German n°3

- Capitalism at work : the bombing of Dresden - February 1945-
- Additional notes
- "Business as usual"
- The invariance of the revolutionary position on war - The meaning of revolutionary defeatism-
- Fuoco alle polveri
  - Guerra e guerriglia sociale in Irak... Fire to the Powder Keg War and social guerrilla struggle in Iraq

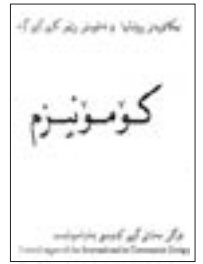


## Central organ of the ICG in English n°13

- Notes against the dictatorship of economy
- The economy is in crisis... may it die!
- Death to recovery!
- An invariant position of the communists: Down with labour !
- On the praise of work
- Slogans foreign to the proletariat, alienated workers' consciousness
- "Burning and looting all illusions tonight"
- "Antiterrorism = development of terror against our struggle"

## Central organ of the ICG in Kurdish n°3

- The invariance of the revolutionary position on war: The meaning of revolutionary defeatism.
- Leaflets
  - Our struggle is not only against the US forces but against all patriotic, religious,... forces and against the Iraqi government!
  - Neither Iraq, nor the United States, down with all states!
  - Down with the war!
  - The way of life of capital is social war
- War is business



## Central organ of the ICG in Greek n°2

- Some reflections on the events that currently shake Iraq
- The capitalist catastrophe
- The invariance of the revolutionary position on war: The meaning of revolutionary defeatism
- Capital: totality and imperialist war

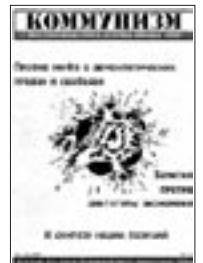


## Central organ of the ICG in Hungarian n°7

- War or revolution
- A journey to Iraq
- Class struggle in Iraq – a veteran's interview
- Iraq – chronology of the class struggle in the 20th century
- Direct action and internationalism
- Against the imperialist war: the only alternative is the war against capital

## Central organ of the ICG in Russian n°1

- Presentation of the group – presentation of the central organ
- Against the myth of democratic rights and liberties
- Notes against the dictatorship of economy
- Towards a synthesis of our positions + leaflets



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- Bourgeois attempts to channel proletarian struggles on an international scale and invariant struggle for the proletarian rupture.
- Genoa 2001: the democratic terrorism in action
- Proletarians of all countries, the class struggle in Algeria is our struggle
- A good citizen

## Central organ of the ICG in Czech n°1

- Who are we?
- Some reflections on the events that currently shake Iraq
- Additional notes on the insurrection of March 1991 in Iraq
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- Leaflet against the ceremonies of May Day



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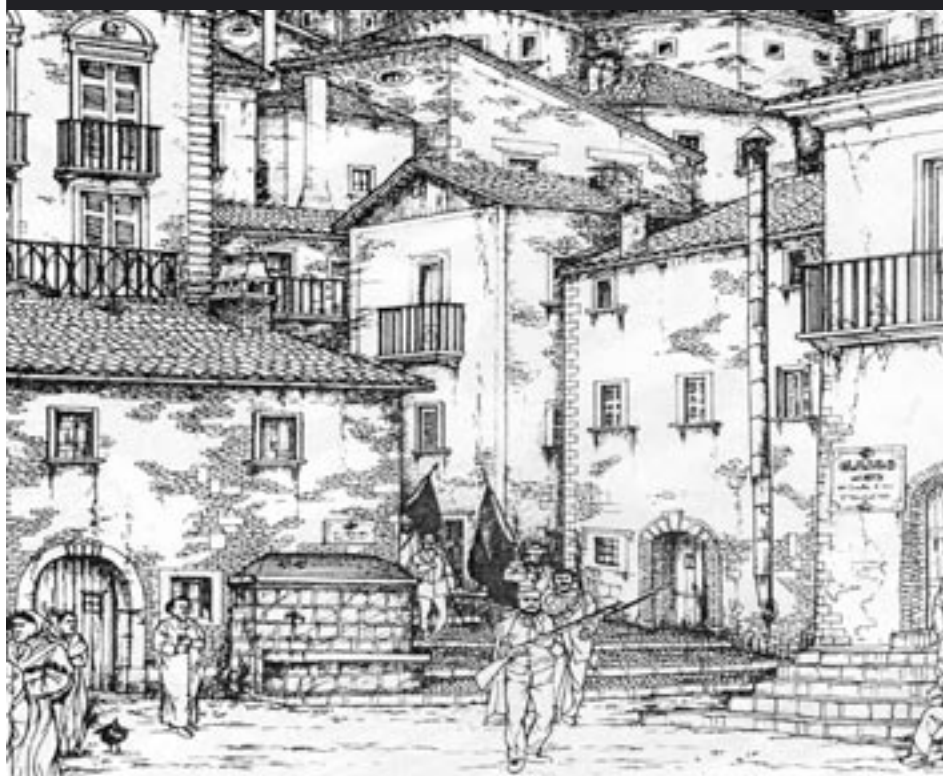
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# DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT FOR THE ABOLITION OF WAGE LABOUR

A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society.

To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organizers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind. This form of socialism has, moreover, been worked out into complete system.

Karl Marx  
Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848