

# Notes against the dictatorship of the economy

The tyranny of value in process - the affirmation of the revolutionary programme.

Over a century has passed since the critique of the economy(1) put forward that the dictatorship of value valorising itself is the essence of capitalist society and that the usefulness of the objects produced is merely a means serving this omnipresent dictatorship. Use value merely supports exchange value, value in process.

All misery, all dictatorships, all wars, all human exploitation and oppression are the expression of this infernal tyranny of value that has become the true subject, the God of the whole society.

The world is not ruled by ideas, politics or laws but by the economy, thirst for profit and money; ideas, politics, rights and state terrorism only serve to maintain and consolidate the expanded reproduction of this tyranny.

In other words, the state, democracy,... ie. the structuring of Capital as a force of domination (in whatever form it organises itself), only prolong of the profound dictatorship of value over human life. Terrorism, be it overt or covert, parliamentarist or bonapartist, fascist or antifascist, is no more than the expression of the merciless reality of a world submitted to the law of value.

The fact of showing that exploitation, dictatorship, oppression,

misery,... are not caused by any particular person, «exploiting boss» or government with a crazy or racist leadership(2), but are the inevitable expression of the development of value in process, was a theoretical point of decisive importance for the revolutionary movement. Demonstrating that all contradictions and torments of bourgeois society are already contained in the basic cells of this society, in the commodity, in the contradiction between use and exchange value, was not only an added stimulus for the process of the development of international revolutionary associationism over the years, but also brought clear elements of revolutionary direction and programmatic content.

Of course, all these programmatic affirmations, this theory which strips capitalism bare, were the product of international worker associationism at a moment of affirmation, and, as Marx and Engels frequently stated, were the work of the Party... This organisational and programmatic strengthening of the revolutionary movement concretised itself later in the Communist Party Manifesto, in the development of the revolutionary press, in the proletariat's direct action, its efforts of centralisation,... as well as later in the First International, the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in Mexico (1868-1870), in France (1870-1871), etc.

Communism thus armed itself with

1. To be more accurate, we should say «the criticism of economy in its theoretical expression» because we are referring to the first theoretical formulations and explanations of this process. In reality, the dictatorship of value has developed since the origin of exchange, the autonomisation of exchange value and the development of the general equivalent, up until the institution of the community of money as the sole and unique community of yielded men: the whole of the human species is submitted to this dictatorship (practice will show, against all kinds of ideologies, including «marxist» ones, that since that historical moment, regardless of immediate forms of production, human beings have become nothing more than a labour force for the reproduction of world capital). As the proletariat is the very object of this dictatorship and opposes it in a total, existential and vital way, its criticism of the economy begins with its own existence.

2. Of course, capitalism still teaches that some bosses are exploiters (as if they were not all) or that dictatorship, war and barbarism can be blamed on some crazy men such as Pinochet, Hitler or Saddam Hussein.

3. The term «clear» is not to be taken

in the democratic sense of the word, meaning that the majority of proletarians would clearly spot their enemy within these movements, but in the sense that the social practice of all reformism objectively opposes itself to the historical and social interests of the whole of the proletariat, in the sense that any reformism reproduces and maintains mercantile society, the root of all evil. Only a more or less organised minority, more or less centralised into an autonomous force depending on the epoch, can openly and explicitly denounce it. It is obvious that the affirmation of the revolutionary programme, the result of the general antagonism of the whole of the proletariat against capitalist society, can only be consciously crystallised by a minority of proletarians; to pretend the opposite would be equivalent to working towards the dissolution of the class, sabotaging the historical action of the constitution of the proletariat into the party.

4. We do not mean that up until that moment total revolution has been a utopia, but that until then the programmes, social projects had stemmed from the ideas and desires of revolutionaries and were still mixed up with the purification of the world of that time. Therefore, although the revolutionaries' acts totally opposed those of the reformists, their projects did not express the same level of rupture and antagonism. For example, we are referring to everything that has been called «utopian socialism and communism» in which revolutionary affirmations coexisted with minor reforms of the bourgeois world.

5. The best way to develop these points lies in the analysis of the experience of the proletariat in its revolutionary attempts, more specifically in the analysis

decisive weapons to understand and denounce any kind of reformism and made a fundamental step towards the affirmation of its own programme. Indeed, at the same time, a huge number of theories and bourgeois parties (both formal and informal social-democratic) aimed at the workers were expressing themselves for the first time as a reaction to the development of the proletarian movement. These forces and ideologies denounced some of the evils of bourgeois society and proposed «solutions» and reforms that left the essence of mercantile society intact, for example Proudhon's theory and plans. Some called themselves socialist, progressive, anarchist, social-democratic, communist, anti-authoritarian,... but it was clear(3) that they were just the miserable expression of the left of bourgeois society itself and their programme only proposed to eliminate one or other «unfortunate» consequence of mercantile society, leaving the basic cell (the commodity), its reproduction, value producing society and thus exchange and wage labour intact.

Thus the practical antagonism of revolutionary movement versus reformism and the affirmation of the programme of the revolution itself developed and asserted themselves simultaneously. A change of government, the «democratisation» of a state, state control of the means of production, agrarian reform, banks for the poor or remuneration based on labour vouchers... can never truly oppose the general dictatorship of value valorising itself and it is ridiculous to think that they could. The only solution, for the whole of humanity, is the abolition of the law of value, the total and despotic destruction of the tyranny of the economy. This is the centre, the heart of the communist programme, the key to the invariance of the revolutionary programme for the destruction of capitalism as much for today's militants as for the militants

of yesterday.

The need for the violent destruction of all bourgeois social structures, for the proletariat to organise into class and party, for the dictatorship of the poor and later, more clearly, for the dictatorship of the proletariat had already been expressed long before Marx and Engels systematised the essence of the revolutionary programme around the destruction of the economy. With Marx and Engels, the need for and the possibility of dictatorship of the proletariat found its practical basis, thus relegating to utopia any pretensions to radical change without the destruction of the commodity. The revolutionary dictatorship for the abolition of the mercantile society was then practically (although not always formally) written on the flag of every real proletarian struggle against capitalism and the state.

Up until then revolutionaries had been seen as utopians(4), but were now able to show that it is actually reforms or partial «revolutions» that constitute utopias.

«It is not radical revolution or universal human emancipation which is a utopian dream ...; it is the partial, merely political revolution, the revolution which leaves the pillars of the building standing» (K.Marx, «Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right», 1844.)

### The ABC of the revolutionary programme: the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Considering the extent of the distortion and ideological falsification characterising the present time, it is not superfluous to clarify an ABC of the revolutionary programme. The essence of capitalism today is (and it could not be any other way) exactly the same as yesterday. As we have said many times before, the revolutionary programme is

invariant; only the dictatorship of the proletariat and the resulting abolition of the commodity and wage-labour can bring a real solution for humanity.

We would very much like to reopen the discussion on the content and extent of what we, the communists, call the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat; we would like to concentrate on certain aspects of our programme that have been distorted and corrupted by the counterrevolution and that will be essential at the time of the next worldwide revolutionary wave of struggle.

Starting from the historical necessity for the destruction of the dictatorship of value, it will be of prime importance to fight against all ideologies (like that of one-nation socialism) that see the dictatorship of the proletariat as a political dictatorship, as a formal dictatorship of one or other sector or party of the «proletariat» or «socialist party». We must oppose them with our own conception that the social character (the total character) of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the historical revenge of use value against value, the affirmation of human necessities against value in process. This clarifies why the proletariat has never been able to impose its dictatorship and that, as the antagonism which will triumph against commodity and all its laws, can only impose itself on a worldwide scale. It then becomes clear that, apart from certain struggles of class against class, as in Mexico at the beginning of this century, in Russia from '17 to '19, in Germany a little later or in Spain in the 30's, when we fought against the thousand and one expressions of the law of value, it is a nonsense to talk about «dictatorship of the proletariat» in any country. Even in exemplary cases of organisation of revolutionary action by our class we have just mentioned, we can only talk about prefiguration and attempts to impose class dictatorship - not about

the dictatorship of the proletariat itself, which can only be worldwide.

In the same way that revisionism and reformism invented the absurd theory of one-nation socialism and the dominant class of the world took pleasure in talking about «socialist countries» or «communist countries», certain more radical sectors of the marxist bourgeois Left invented the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country or, worse still, the theory of the workers' state, first in Russia and later in other countries.

We also want to stress how the need to abolish autonomous decisions by productive units, to abolish the autonomy of sellers and buyers, of supply and demand and to abolish the equality of the individual and his freedom to decide (the very basis of mercantile society) is an essential aspect of the dictatorship of the proletariat and will be decisive in coming battles of the proletariat. We want to emphasise that the dictatorship of the proletariat will not only have to abolish firms in their present condition, but also units which are autonomous in their decision-making, whether as groups of factories or as economic sectors, as both of these imply the existence of exchange between them. We want to show the vital need to abolish democracy in all its expressions, not only parliamentary but also «councilist», workerist, etc. Last, but not least, we would like to develop the key elements in the fight against the ensemble of ideologies (such as federalism, workerism, «anarchism»,...) which will be an obstacle to the development of revolutionary and organic centralisation against the law of value.

The programmatical determinations of revolution develop in antagonism to the programmatical determinations of capitalism and to its attempts at reform, which is precisely why we feel it is indispensable to draw these general lines concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat in this text on the dictator-

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of the causes of its defeats. In this sense, we are continuing our fundamental programmatical work on the revolutionary period 1917-1923 worldwide, as well as the revolutionary attempts in Mexico at the beginning of the century and in Spain in the 30's.

6. Commercial agreements uniting Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay.  
7. On this subject, also read «General Characteristics of the struggles of the

Capitalism in previous centuries concealed its aims (at least ideologically and partially) and no government would have been able to say, as openly as they do today, that people must sacrifice their life in the interests of the economy.



ship of value, the dictatorship of the economy. However, further development of topics linked to the destruction of the dictatorship of value will take us too far away from the aims of this text and will soon be the focus of another text(5).

#### Open discourse on the dictatorship of the economy.

Here we want to underline some aspects of the dictatorship of the economy today, the modern development of the dictatorship imposed by value in process on all spheres of human life, the current forms of dominant discourse which aim to increasingly subject human beings to the faceless monster which is the economy.

Even though the dictatorship of the economy has always been a constant feature of capital, it nevertheless required a long process before the duty to serve the economy, the need to sacrifice oneself for competitiveness, the obligation to make an effort for the national economy or any demand to tighten belts to «boost» the economy could be declared openly. Much water has gone under the bridge and much blood been shed throughout the world until it has finally become accepted as the natural order of things that man is worthless and the only thing that matters is the national economy, competitiveness...

Although bourgeois society, and particularly the national economy, has always considered human beings as a mere means of enrichment, capitalism in previous centuries concealed its aims (at least ideologically and partially) and no government would have been able to say, as openly as they do today, that people must sacrifice their life in the interests of the economy. Dominant factions of the bourgeoisie looked for (and, for the most part, found) ways of presenting the interests and needs of their class and faction as beneficial to their own class in the first instance

and, second, to the whole society (an essential condition to enable class domination to impose itself without any major explosions). They never tired of repeating that the problems of the disinherited masses would be solved in the medium or long term and that the world would become a better place. Governments promised a brilliant future in the same way that priests promised the kingdom of heaven.

Today, there is no such talk, no further promises of a better future on earth, no mention of a solution to hunger and misery - they state openly and defiantly that we must continue to sweat our guts out and that the future will be even worse. In the past, although few believed it, it was said that misery would decline, that the starving and miserable would be saved by economic growth and that, in the future, there would be less and less of them. Today, they do not even attempt to hide the fact that in the world they promise, there will always be people in rags, ever more and more on the scrap heap.

Politicians and governments no longer make speeches demanding sacrifices in the name of a better world for all. They openly state the need to condemn more people to unemployment, starvation, misery,... the need to make cut-backs in social expenditure, etc, because the economy requires it in order to make businesses competitive. Given that the development of capital imposes one sole programme on all bourgeois factions, the more uniform their speeches become, the more apparent it is that there are no differences between politicians and governments. Their electoral campaigns, their parliamentary struggles and their coups are not setting different programmes or factions against each other, but are only quarrelling over their share of the spoils, bribes and other tricks, which is doled out according to the fierceness/eagerness of their struggle to increase

exploitation and the appropriation of surplus-value: the greater their capacity to give a framework and to adhere to austerity measures, the greater their share.

The economy itself has become the dominant issue for all politicians and all governments. In the past, the decisive place of the economy was hidden behind religion, politics or various other ideologies and there was no way in which it could be used as an argument of force against human beings; moreover, a politician or a government would fall into disgrace if he dared to reveal the secret of domination and openly declare that all should be sacrificed on the altar of the economy, of the national economy's competitiveness.

The original guilt complex of the bourgeoisie (that imposed its social system in the name of the people and social equality -«Liberty, Equality, Fraternity») lead it to hide the fact that this system sacrifices human beings on the altar of money. Politicians hid what cynical and lucid bourgeois economists (such as David Ricardo) had discovered and written down in their scientific works. Politicians, ideologists, and governors assumed the task of keeping the «secret» in the circle of the «initiated». Today, on the contrary, they proclaim it far and wide: the only thing that matters is the drive for profit, the competitiveness of the national economy and if people must starve for it, then this is just a necessary evil. Every politician tries to show off his entrepreneurial skills, calling on the population to work harder and earn less.

The destruction of man and of solidarity between men has reached paranoid levels: It has become normal, logical and natural that people should starve to allow businesses to be profitable. In the same way that we are advised to take our umbrella with us when it is raining, we are told that hun-

dreds of thousands of people, millions of human beings will have to suffer for the sake of the national economy, and that the only way to escape this disaster is to work harder. As a way of trying to deprive us of our last remaining grains of class solidarity, it is suggested that we give a donation to an NGO or buy non-perishable goods at our local corner shop for them to send to the poor in another part of the world. Sacrifice and individual welfare are the order of the day.

Further explanation or justification is not really necessary - it is obvious that the degree of separation, of alienation from human need and human community is so enormous that it seems perfectly normal to everybody for a politician to drone on for hours about economic statistics, the need for people to make sacrifices and the benefits for businesses. The concrete, the reality of man, is turned into a complete abstraction, so that what appears to be concrete and real for the amorphous mass of citizen-spectators is in fact a total abstraction: the well-being of the country, the future of the national economy. The famous revolution in communication, that has in fact resulted in human separation at levels never previously experienced, is a decisive factor in this generalised abstraction of the human race. It would have been totally impossible to convince a proletarian in past centuries or at the beginning of this century that it was not him, his comrades, his children, his parents,... that is to say his class, humanity... that mattered, but rather the «Maastricht criteria», the Mercosur(6), «Plan A or Plan B», the «benefits to our economy offered by the latest tax»,... and this abstraction has a greater right to exist than man made of flesh and blood. This is why any proletarian acting according to his needs and the needs of his class is conspiring against established democratic order.

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present time», in Communism n°9.

It is beyond the framework of this text to discuss up to what point this situation marks the objective and historical limits of the whole of the bourgeois social system, given that the ruling class is no longer able to offer any viable plan for the human race or, on the contrary, whether the present situation reveals that this system can carry on imposing any kind of sacrifice, given that the proletariat is not capable of reconstituting itself as class, as an historical force at this time in our history. In any case, we think that both these realities characterise the present international situation, in so far as the ruling class always acts as if it has no limits and the proletariat only occasionally and

regionally responds, without managing to constitute itself into a worldwide force. This situation continues to determine an ensemble of contradictory characteristics in present-day struggles(7)

«Crisis» or «recovery», it's always the same old song.

«**T**he crisis has arrived, we have to tighten our belts», «the recovery is fragile, just a little bit more effort»,... «we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, now is not the time to be making demands», «We are doing better, but growth is still weak»... is what we hear from the left and from the right of this spectacle aimed at submitting us to the dictatorship of the economy. If this damned economy goes wrong we have to make sacrifices to put it back on track, if it's going okay, we have to continue to make an effort so as not to thwart it and so as to improve it even more, if it is struggling, we have to make further sacrifices to enable it to recover. This is the ever clearer order of the

system that we are subjected to. What they are telling us is «keep on rowing, it's impossible to leave this galley.»

It is like believing in Father Christmas to live in hope that a government, a political party, a union or a TV channel,... will ever announce the good news that we can now make the most of life with no more sacrifices, that we will live a better life and even the poorest will be privileged, with increases in wages and social assistance, all of us working less and eating more.

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8. This does not mean that this article is any more or less important than other more abstract or global texts such as the introduction to the dictatorship of the economy. Both texts express different levels of the same content that are both necessary and essential for our struggle.



Below we have published a translation of two texts, examples of the forms taken today by the dictatorship of the economy.

The first one «The Economy is in crisis... May it die!» was translated and published in French in 1998. Written by Akefalos in Spain, it talks about the dictatorship of economy, the real domination of monetary abstraction and, while formulating a classist criticism of capital and state, it describes with precision and richness the present forms of domination, separation of human beings, imposition of dominant ideology, of citizenship, of generalised imbecilisation.

The second text «Death to recovery» was published in french in Communisme n° 42 (1995). Written on a relatively concrete and illustrative level it shows, on the basis of official figures and quotations(8), that even given the best possible scenario, the situation of the proletariat is getting worse and worse.

Written at different periods, in different countries and in different circumstances, they both denounce essentially the same thing. They both express the struggle against the current, criticise the official discourse of all bourgeois fractions and oppose capital and the state with the direct action of the proletariat.

# The Economy is in crisis...



## May it die!

**We won't believe  
in the crisis  
until the rich begin  
killing themselves**

### Extracts (1)

The bluff of the year '92 has passed (2). After having hypnotised people with a «prosperous» period featuring the consumption of rubbish, debt, and the growth of speculative benefits, now the crisis is being pushed on us. Ah yes, the national selection won the medal and the untouchable Barça won the soccer championship. Some time before the PSOE, with its reconversion, as a loyal servant of Capital carried out the transición (3) and began the modernisation of Oppression in an accelerated way. In doing so it erased from the map the assembly movements, which characterised the end of Franquism and the transición. Civilised trade-unionism was implanted and ill-be-

ing was framed in the language of state-capital: economy, politics. When trade-unions (and other forms of civic opposition) say No we can be sure that it's a Yes in disguise, in that the State needs an opposition to carry out sham strikes so as to demobilise and discourage people. In government/trade-union negotiations the function of the latter appears clearly in the spectacular game of politics: control the poor and inject the «raison d'état» into our heads.

We live in a society in which politics have displaced the very language of the oppressed(4). This lie is decided, managed, and disguised into a single reality. Our misery and our monotony are managed. Wealth, which is already abstract and non-existent is managed like God in the middle ages. No one can be outside of today's christianism: the cult of monetary abstraction, Economy, and Politics. Projects are managed and developed to manage the deficits, benefits, and repression.

The social priests with their social

1. The following text is an extract from a debate published some years ago (1995-96) in the issue #8 of the periodical Akefalos (Apartado de Correos 37120-08080 Barcelona, Spain). A photocopy of the full text is available at our central address. The editors of «Akefalos» explain the name of the journal as follows: «Greek mythology describes a group of people without heads, with neither leaders nor subordination. Because we are people who have lost our heads, in the sense that it's considered impossible. Eccentric beings with no common sense, we fight against the social normality of slaves and their masters.» The notes at the bottom of the pages are from the editors of Communism.

2. The bluff of '92 which is mentioned here refers to the World Fair in Seville, the commemoration of the 500 years since the «discovery» of the Americas, the Olympic Games in Barcelona... If in some ways this article refers to Spain the reader will quickly notice that other aspects are clearly valid in a much wider way. This is what incited us to publish this text.

3. In Spain the transición is the period of «democratisation of franquism» during which the state reorganised itself thanks to the management of the Spanish Socialist Labour Party (PSOE).

4. One of the aspects which we liked about this text is that comrades having a different political formation and ideas different from ours, should come to formulate in such precise terms things so similar to what we express about society. The contents of the following sentence for example seems very clear to us, even if we doubtless would have formulated it differently, in saying that democracy (not only political, but social and economic, integral democracy) destroys communication within our class, by negating associative ties. In the same way we perfectly see how democracy «displaces the very language of the oppressed», because it disintegrates them as a class, because it atomises, because it transforms them into buyers and sellers, into

The Economy is in crisis... May it die!

Money brings about distance and isolation among the poor. The need of money determines a qualitative loss in relations. The anguish of money as a distorting element comes into our behaviour: appearance, facade. We show it all, we have to show it all even though we know very well that we can never own more than a tiny part, generally the most kitsch, the ersatz...

useful idiots and citizens.

5. What is described here is applicable to far more than just «throughout Europe».

6. The authors of the article are completely right to affirm that money separates men. But they consider this to be something relatively local or new, yet it's a phenomenon generalised to all of the capitalist world for several centuries. In the «Manuscripts of 1843/44», Marx makes reference to previous centuries and perfectly describes the way the community of money eliminates the community of men. We do not deny that things get worse as they go along and that's why we agree to underline this, as does Akefalos which tries to express a qualitative leap in the dehumanisation of human relations due to money. But we ought never to forget that these elements are the very essence of the world capitalist system, a system which humanity endures since at least 5 centuries, and not only in Europe but in all the world.

7. The opposition between workers' assemblies and trade-unions as apparatuses of the capital is logical in certain circumstances, when the trade-union bureaucratism is such that the trade-unions don't function on the basis of factory assemblies. But we ought not forget that when the radicalisation of the proletariat is important, the trade-unions also function on the basis of «workers' assemblies» so as to better carry out their function of containing and liqui-

services domesticate, recompose, re-use marginality for the humanitarian commerce of the concept of Solidarity, reappropriated by the State. The spectacle of social costs, and their decrease, and of the fictitious struggle that's created once more, are developed.

The useless, the fired, and the specialists of social emptiness investigate, calculate, redefine the problems so as to solve them through their own self-perpetuation. In reality, they are our problems.

Marginalisation takes place by putting people on the dole for life. Marginalisation takes place through the fruitful business of drug repression, of «delinquency», thanks to the great commerce of total control of society. They manage, manage, manage,... They manage as they infest our lives with «security» and with mortal social boredom.

The means of communication diffuse their lies, the hypocritical gesticulations of superfluous commercials of information. Our neurones are paralysed... Beware! They speak, inform, broadcast, sell, form. They destroy, immobilise what exists, the desire of life which is revolt, and which only takes on an existence when it dies and becomes sellable by all mediums (of diffusion). Only their vision of the world exists, a world in their image and which resembles them.

They frighten us. They incite fear in us. They integrate us into their paranoid game of apparent realities. Computer control, control through information, political circus, invention of races, reality show, recyclable ecological-and-selling-so-very-well survival, they close us into this routine.

**How to define this «modern» permanent counterrevolution in this piece of the pie?**

**A**t the end of the 1960s there developed a process of modernisation of oppression throughout

Europe(5) (in part so as to end the wild and non-mediated struggles such as the French May '68 or the Italian autumn), which made the world even more unbearable for us. The real communication, without any intermediary, which had risen up from experience and struggle was cut. The gap which separated the ruling class, the State, and the oppressed, and which could be perilous for domination, is overcome by politics, trade-unionism, consumerism, and the need of money. Money brings about distance and isolation among the poor. The need of money determines a qualitative loss in relations(6). The anguish of money as a distorting element comes into our behaviour: appearance, facade. We show it all, we have to show it all even though we know very well that we can never own more than a tiny part, generally the most kitsch, the ersatz...

The caricature of «wealth» is shown, and it is precisely a caricature because it is exhibited in the world of the poor.

All we know about the world of the rich is what we are shown on television series. And we know that there is nothing more fake, but it's also what we most desire and what we imitate the most.

Society shows itself capable, time and again, to digest and sometimes to create revolts, be it through repression, recuperation, or both at the same time. The dynamism of society manages to integrate, be it willingly, or by force.

During the transición and under the government of the PSOE the domesticating role of the trade-unions, as apparatuses in the service of State-Capital was quite clear. Faced with these trade-unions there were, at times, assembly movements(7) which in outflanking them confronted capital. The State recreated the trade-unions so as to control struggles through bureaucracy, representation, and the act of negotiating by delegation. Today the trade-unions have very few



adherents.

They reach less than 15% of wage workers(8) and are greatly subsidised by the State. Thus they form an integrated part of the State and are, in themselves, an institution of the latter at the same time as its best servant.

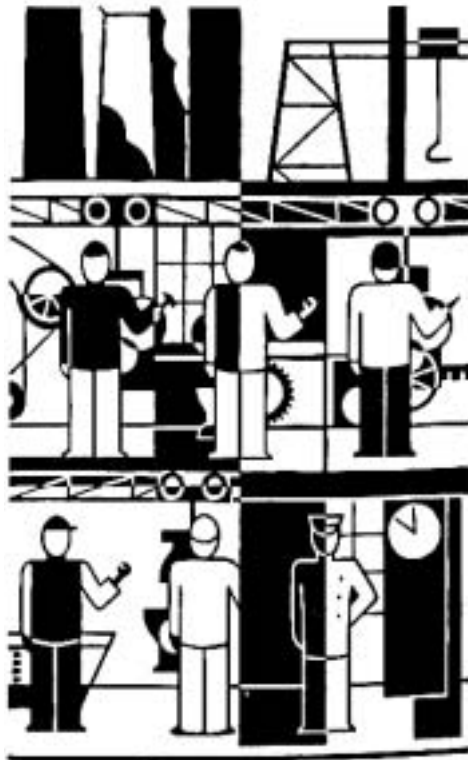
The «Raison d'état» ended up imposing itself by liquidating the assembly movement through trade-union recuperation, repression (many times very bloody as in the case of Vitoria, Reinosa, Euskalduna, against the dockers,... going so far as to murder proletarians), and division. It managed in this way to impose its dynamic, its discourse, its way of living.

Democratic spectacle tries to channel social insubordination. The very holy trinity State-Capital-Economy is above all criticism and so is unattackable. Everything is submitted to the logic of money, that is, to the logic of mere subsistence, all the way to its maximal expression of economic abstraction. Abstraction of a lie, which is universal and in which we believe.

The impossible ideal of modern capitalism is to transform metropolitan workers into middle-managers. Faced with this collective failure, an important part of workers and a great deal of developing countries(9) are forced into misery and marginality. The lie of belonging to a pacifist middle class, serves as to muffle the blow of potential social deflagration.

Absurd notions such as users and civic spirit appear here. They flow out of, and also provoke, the submission of daily behaviour. Citizens? A grateful term used by the masters for the good slaves, poor but honest.

And in the idea of a middle class appears a new contradiction: decrease in budgets, increasingly costly standard of living, and new commercial expansion for the big ones. The multinationals dominate the market, absorb and annihilate the little ones and, at the same time, decentralise production in small groups which, in most cases are only companies which hide the reality of autonomous workers, dependent on the multinational itself, or else they create centres where new urban workers are hired by the day.



### Of course with this crisis yuppies aren't jumping out of windows

Immersed in the shit of survival loaded with alluring advertisements and shop windows ready to rob us of our miserable wages. The ground is strewn with coins or alms for those on the dole. Knives pulled out so as to get a dose even if it means ending up in the nick. Workers in self-employment, or what comes out to the same thing, in self-exploitation(10). Workers sub-

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dating proletarian struggles.

8. Contrary to other affirmations of this text which are valid for the rest of the world, what is affirmed here touches a specific reality in Spain. Indeed, even if all of the world trade-unions constitute apparatuses of the State, and though we've seen through these last years a decrease in the number of trade-union members and thus a decrease in the control over the working class, the explanation for such a meagre percentage of trade-union members typical of Spain is to be found today in the weakening of the trade-unions which a left government systematically implicates in its management business. And indeed what credibility must remain in the trade-union protests coming from parties and organisations which share the government? It's so as to regain credibility that the trade-unions and the parties so often need an «opposition treatment».

9. The use of terms such as «developing countries» and the dichotomy between countries which it implies constitutes in such a clear text surprising ideological concessions to public opinion and the vi-

By atomising and breaking down communication between people, by invading private life, the State tries to distort the struggle which seems to be led against it.

sion of the world imposed by the media.  
10. At other times we have already noted that the instructions «self-management = self-exploitation» is not accurate, despite the propaganda power which it contains. The subject of exploitation is always capital and never oneself as the formulation «self-exploitation» seems to indicate. More so, the object of exploitation, the exploited, is always the proletariat, the proletarians. Through this sort of formulation branded against those who praise self-management in capitalism, we want to remark that in reality it is capital which keeps the management and control of exploitation, and that with self-management workers, rather than liberating themselves from exploitation, collectively watch over it so as to make it more effective. It is a question of self-control, self-discipline, and in most cases even a quantitative and qualitative increase in exploitation... but always for the benefit of capital. And in this way we can see as the consequence of this affirmation a certain confusion about the subject of exploitation: neither the client, nor the user may be, in the strict sense of the term, exploiters. And it does not make a lot of sense to put them together with the tax department, which is part of the subject of exploitation to the degree that the surplus value which the state appropriates is used to the benefit of collective capital. But once more the tax department is not the subject of exploitation, it is capital. The expression «self-management of exploitation» which the comrades use further along in the text is however, accurate in the sense that it is the worker himself who contributes to the management of the exploitation carried out by capitalism.

11. The term used in Spanish is «suciedad», a play on words between «sucio» («dirty») and «sociedad» («society»).

mitted to the account of others, the exploiter is the client, the user and the tax department. Self-management of exploitation, emptiness of social struggle. Too much work, it's time to take a shower and shout out an arrogant «I'm my own master». Never has a worker so clearly proclaimed his eternal self-prostitution, his will to integrate himself in the innocuous middle class. And let's hope that all of this will not be assumed as it's done by the small businessman.

Urban day labourers. People looking for odd jobs so as to subsist. Swamped jobs. The dole for life. Precarious jobs. Workers domesticated by costs, threats, contracts, credentials. Trade-unions which decide for you, enterprises for the reproduction of labour power. Mobility, a euphemism for immigration for the first class citizen, that is with an indigenous slave passport. If it's ever more unbearable to continue working, in these conditions of submission and growing control, it's also ever more difficult to survive without working. That is, it's more and more difficult to obtain the means of subsistence without working.

Our lives are invaded by cybernetic images which distract yet stupefy. The television is the summit: a girl in her room with a video watches how Michael Jackson fucks Mickey Mouse, while a woman buys a shoe polisher thanks to interactive television. The computer decomposes the child's Martian neurones as he desperately tries to kill aliens even though the remote control doesn't work. Speech disappears, only Capital, the *raison d'état* speaks. They technically organise and control the solitude which they oblige us to live in. The microchip does piece work in an isolated way. The State is the heart of what we live most intimately, it controls the aspects of daily life, and diverts it to its liking.

By atomising and breaking down communication between people, by invading private life, the State tries to distort the struggle which seems to be

led against it.

There is nothing without the State. Everything must take place under the State's surveillance, with the protection and the benediction of politics. It is the most important gain of the second world war. The democratic State affirms itself as the only valid and recognised speaker, the only valid and recognised mediator, and the only valid and recognised communicator of ideas.

Democracy is the illusion of communication. Through it and in it politicians express their ideas which end up becoming those of the majority. The Power to be able to communicate and to know how to communicate between us is taken away from us, the words on our lips are erased so as to be substituted by ideological lies.

Democracy is nothing other than the appropriation of communication (the power to communicate) by politicians who convert themselves into representatives and delegates of our never expressed ideas.

Democracy is the appearance of the confrontation of rival lies which complement one another and to which the only and primordial end is to preserve the *raison d'état*.

### What the telly doesn't show doesn't exist

Whatever is excluded, whatever is situated outside of its reality and its lie does not exist. And so if you see something, it's not what you've seen but what the telly says which is reality. It resembles a lie, but it works very well for them. There are people who see not with their own eyes but only through the eyes of the State, be it by fear, or out of the apathy of their cerebral microchips.

Fucking society(11) based on information! Microelectronics, genetics, control, ecology, services, post-industrialism in the centres, industrialisation

in the semi-periphery, and war in the periphery.

The crisis which is imposed on us allows the headlong rush of Capitalism to continue to reproduce itself...

The Society of the Spectacle, of Commodity, of Control has come along and has developed itself in terms which go well beyond the predictions and observations of the situationists. At the same time, for us the crisis is the fear of the dole and the police in the heart of our lives.

**They have announced  
the crisis,  
we have always been  
in crisis**

**U**nder the pretext of the crisis they justify the necessity of tightening the grip of exploitation and control of the population. It all depends on «how far people are ready to go». From the worker of well-being, to precariousness. Loss of a century of concessions and conquests. But in this country we've never known the «welfare State». We've always known the «welfare of the State».

The general strike is a part of the function of trade-unions in the middle of domination. They move forwards in creating a movement so as to channel the dissatisfaction due to the increase in exploitation which means the crisis and all of the juridico-economic consequences which it provokes: new laws on employment and the decrease in social costs. Social dissatisfaction is held back so that it doesn't get dangerous.

The trade-unions saw themselves rejected several times for their role in the politico-socio-economic spectacle. That's why during the capitalist offensive of reconversion in 1992, and during the crisis which followed, they had to radicalize themselves in appearance so as to continue playing their role, that is, so as to continue existing. They now transform the

weapon of the strike into an inoffensive show with data and political numbers. These trade-union shows are directed against ourselves and our own...

In the same way in which the individual has been converted into an isolated producer consumer, struggles remain isolated inside of the circus of information. We must struggle as much against the atomisation which they impose on us as against the isolation of our collectives and the struggles against power. And thus the importance of communication, the diffusion of our speech, and of collective practices which ought to speak for themselves without resorting to ideological justifications, flags, uniforms, or acronyms.

Turn the tables on the use that State-capital gives to streets. Circulation of cars and of commodities, shop window of solitude. Faced with boredom and the

binomial money-amusement, seeking a really amusing time out. That is re-creative of life. Subversive of order.

Reaffirming acts of insubordination on all levels. When insubordination is real (refuse of dialogue with Power) carries with it a victory because Democracy needs a question-and-answer so as to function. A theory and practice debate is needed on the forms of struggles to take. Experimenting the forms of our struggles and those of those close to us.

Foreign to ourselves, cancelled, alienated. This world is a world foreign to us and in which life no longer belongs to us. This world does not affirm us, on the contrary it negates us. That's why we can only think in negative terms. There is no other alternative, if the economy is in crisis, may it die!



# DEATH TO «RECOVERY»

Despite the local examples used in this text, we want to stress that capital is a worldwide relationship, that value develops on a worldwide scale and imposes its rule on every inch of this planet.

«The recovery is here, we must press on!» is what we hear day in, day out. Newspapers, politicians, journalists, economists, etc. stuff our heads by way of that mindless box - the television. They explain to us, with supporting figures and graphs, that the recovery, even if weak and unsteady on its feet, is finally back. They then go on to justify sickening austerity policies by telling us to «Carry on tightening your belts and the recovery will be even stronger!». The bourgeoisie wants to chain us to the defence of the economy as well as to make us believe that this time we are really «out of the tunnel» at last.

As if «the god of the Economy» would bless us with some god-send after having ignored us for 20 years! For what possible reasons would growth(1) have returned?

In answering this question, let's first remind ourselves of bourgeois terminology: what they mean by 'recovery' or 'growth' is an increase in their wealth in one country or a group of countries (increase in the Gross Domestic Product). Expanded reproduction is a rule inherent to capital and this is how ideologists refer to it.

Recession is an insufficient increase in the GDP. Bourgeois rhetoric boils down to saying that «we» in the USA and Great Britain are richer compared to 3 or 4 years ago and the whole world is compared to one year ago.

Behind that «we» lies in fact «the people», i.e. the statistical average between classes, with proletarians and bourgeoisie lumped together. Quoting a 3% recovery over one year is the equivalent of saying that there was 3% more wealth in that country by the end of that year. It clearly does not mean that each «individual» is 3% better-off. Indeed, we will go on to show how the bourgeoisie's wealth has increased at the expense

of an intensification of proletarians' misery.

Moreover, since the 3% increase is mathematically(2) redistributed amongst all, it means that the relative increase in the bourgeois' wealth is far greater than 3% and our poverty continues to worsen. What's the reality behind this explosion of wealth?

Let's talk about the USA, considered by the world bourgeoisie to be the «star pupil». The figures speak for



1. «Growth» and «recovery» are synonymous. Moreover, the bourgeoisie uses both terms together, as in «The recovery of growth».

2. Let us not delude ourselves. This redistribution is confined to statistics and is consequently only a virtual reality - we proletarians will still be poor for some time to come.

Valorisation/devalorisation:  
Capital's unsustainable contradiction.

To valorise itself, value must be partly invested in constant capital (purchase of equipment, buildings, raw materials...), and partly in variable capital (purchase of labour force). As its name suggests, constant capital only transmits its own value to the commodity produced, by way of work of course. The second part however (that part of variable capital which allowed the purchase of the labour force) has its value not only reproduced but also increased by the action of the labour force, by work. It is this second part that produces surplus-value. Indeed, labour force put into action, living work, is the only commodity capable of creating value and is therefore the only source of profit for capitalists.

The competition inherent to capital forces each capitalist to produce as cheaply as possible in order to impose himself in the face of his competitors. To do so, he is obliged to increase the productivity of his company. This productivity increase occurs by way of a growth in equipment and infrastructure (constant capital) and a relative cut-back of the labour force (variable capital). Consequently, there is less and less living work within the products with a resultant fall in the value of the means of production: this is devalorisation.

To counter this effect, the capitalists at first try to catch up by increasing the quantity of constant capital invested, at the expense of variable capital... resulting in a reinforcement of devalorisation! The mass of produced commodities will increase but each unit will contain less and less human labour and consequently less new value. Value can only realise itself if the commodity is finally sold. If there is no buyer, value won't be realised and will therefore be lost, resulting in a further devalorisation.

With the generalisation of the increase in productivity, the quantity of work contained in each end-product decreases. The same applies to the means of production that produces these commodities. Ultimately, the value of the totality of products and the means of production decreases. The devalorisation becomes more and more violent.

All this movement leads to crisis. Existing capital experiences more and more difficulty in valorising itself. It is a period in which capitalists are forced to lay off proletarians, to cut wages, to destroy stocks of unsold commodities... Capital's only way out is to destroy surpluses on a larger scale in order to boost valorisation: thus generalised war. Generalised war means the destruction of constant capital (factories, infrastructure, stocks,...) and of variable capital: the slaughter of proletarians on all fronts. In this way, merely a momentary solution to the crisis, Capital obtains a brutal devalorisation by the pure and simple destruction of men and objects functioning as Capital.

Fighting against decreased value by destroying value! This apparent paradox can be explained by the fact that the destruction of constant capital allows valorisation to be boosted (reconstruction) since the proportion of constant capital has suddenly dropped as compared to variable capital. And off they go again.

One could be led to believe that Capital follows an infinite circle, but this is not the case because the starting point of each cycle is never the same. Capital starts every cycle with an ever-increasing degree of technique and productivity meaning that the accumulation is greater and greater and the resulting destruction all the more considerable. It is an extending spiral rather than a process going round in circles. As time has gone by, the bourgeoisie has learned to delay the day of reckoning of the crisis (by destruction of stock, restructurisation, fictive capital, artificial increase in real demand...). But the longer it puts off the fall, the harder it will be due to the greater quantity of surplus capital.

themselves: Since 1991, 3-4% growth per year, rate of unemployment at 5-6%, 3% inflation rate and the creation of about 2 million jobs a year.

For several years, some American companies(3) have made huge profits. Records have been beaten in the computer science sector by Microsoft, in the pharmaceutical industry by Pfizer (several billion dollars), in the car industry by Chrysler (3,8 billion dollars). Obviously, these figures would give even the most blasé of stockmarket speculators a hard-on. However, we set our reality against the one-sided picture painted by the bourgeoisie. This is, therefore, another point of view, that of those who produce the wealth, those who, as always in this fucking system, are deprived of the enjoyment of their product.

How can these companies make such profits? The answer is simple: they lay off workers in order to reduce production costs and then put more pressure on the remaining proletarians.

The following is a quotation by F.Rohatyn who is, amongst others, an official adviser to Bill Clinton and the director of a bank:

«The race for productivity is accompanied by structural unemployment that spares no one: blue collar workers, white collar workers,... and it will continue. All big companies are now looking to reduce their staffing levels. For example Pfizer, a pharmaceutical company that I know well because I am a member of its board of directors, have just decided to get rid of 4.000 jobs (10% through early retirement or sackings). And yet, the company earns billions. We live in a rather frightening period: take a look at IBM, Intel and Microsoft. They all

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3. Competition is raging: that's a rule of the system. While some companies make huge profits, others are either phagocytosed by them or forced into bankruptcy. But the

have roughly the same stockmarket value of between 20 and 25 billion dollars. But IBM has 150,000 employees, Intel 15,000 and Microsoft 6000. This means that the creation of wealth will need a smaller and smaller but more and more qualified, adaptable and flexible workforce.»

What this bourgeois is cynically telling us is that proletarians at IBM sweat 25 times less surplus-value than those at Microsoft and 10 times less than those at Intel. It is easy to understand why IBM has laid off scores of workers over the past few years. The example of Pfizer is representative of current practice.

There are many other similar examples across the globe:

- In the chemical industry in Germany, 1994 profits were huge: up 99.2% for BASF to 1.209 billion DM, up 83% for Hoechst to 1.69 billion DM, up 32.2% for Bayer to 2.38 billion DM. Manfred Schneider, Bayer's chairman, stated that «there will not be, under any circumstances, an increase in the number of jobs». Indeed, his company has just sacked another 3,400 of us.

- In France, the 63 biggest French industrial groups made huge profits after reducing employment by 3.5% in '93 and 2.5% in '94. They are planning another 0.5% reduction in 1995.

- In 1994, in the French car industry, PSA and Renault made enormous profits and reached record levels of production. To show their gratitude to the proletarians who worked themselves into the ground, these industrialists announced planned lay-offs of 3500 and 5000 workers respectively between 1995 and 1996.

- In the telecommunications sector, the steel industry, the air transport sector, the paper industry... it's the same old story, as much in the USA as in Europe, Asia or Africa.

- In 1994, the profits of British banks increased by 100% to 176%. News that will, no doubt, delight the tens of thousands made homeless by the

beneficial effects of the recovery in Great Britain in the same year.

- In the USA, more than 10% of the population live in absolute poverty and do not register in official statistics. Moreover, 25% to 35% (depending on the source) are on the threshold of poverty. This allows us to relativise the official unemployment rate(4).

As for the number of jobs created in the USA(5), what we are not told is that every year 2,000,000 low-paid industrial jobs (10 to 15 US\$ per hour, with social cover) are abolished, whereas 2,000,000 new jobs, easy to relocate and with even lower wages (\$4.5 per hour, with no social cover) are created.

Gail Forler, a cynical manager of capital summarised the situation very clearly:

« The well-paid industrial jobs of the '70's are over!», adding that «Neither new technology, nor new markets will be sufficient reasons to create jobs. In order to solve their labour problems, employers prefer to buy a new machine or to reorganise their staff.»

It is therefore crystal clear that proletarians who still have a job will not only have to do the work of those who have been sacked, but will also be forced to work in a way that ensures the company produces more than before!

Still on the subject of the USA, the «mass-media» announced that poverty has increased by 10% in 20 years. This figure is nonsensical: which proletarian in the United-States can be convinced that with 1995's wages he can buy 90% of what he bought in 1975?

Figures on inflation are meaningless. All that interests us is that wages are decreasing and prices rising! All the penpushers sound surprised:

«In total, despite the recovery, 30 million people, that is a quarter of the working population, are said to be outside the normal channels of employment (doing the kind of shit

~~result is always the same for us - more misery!~~

4. This is not specific to the USA. In fact, all governments doctor their statistics. For example, in Belgium the official unemployment rate is about 14% of the working population (approximately 500,000 out of work). This figure obviously «forgets» that, for the past 10 years, anyone over the age of 55 is no longer included in the statistics (roughly 50,000). '14%' also «leaves out» the 180,000 who have been excluded from unemployment benefits over last two years and «ignores» the 400,000 «ghost jobs» paid for by unemployment insurance funds. Making a very quick calculation, taking into account the 50,000 unemployed excluded for over two years, gives us a figure of 1,180,000 true unemployed. In terms of percentage, on the basis of 3,500,000 people of working age in Belgium, this shows a real unemployment rate of about 33%. It goes without saying that this kind of criticism could apply to all figures and all countries.

5. Yet another example illustrating the terminology used by the bourgeoisie to impose its point of view: «jobs created», «creation of jobs»... these words creep into everyday language and tend to present the capitalist as a «work giver» rather than as an exploiter. The State is not a philanthropic association striving to provide us with a means of survival: when employing and

jobs that we've just talked about, ed.) and suffer the aberration of being both below the poverty line yet being workers.»

Alain Lebaube, *le Monde*, Bilan économique et social 1994)

Our very point, gentlemen! Work never makes the slave rich, but always the slave-driver. If working made one rich, the bourgeoisie would have banned the proletariat from working years ago and done the work itself!

The reality or unreality of the «recovery» must be put in the much wider context of the different phases of the absurd and inhuman system that is capitalism. If not, it is impossible to understand and it becomes a religious question.

It is only possible to understand the «recovery» if we refer back to Capital's fundamental contradiction: that between valorisation and devalorisation (see below).

We then realise that there is no «general recovery», insofar as to achieve this Capital needs destruction on a far greater scale than is occurring in current wars, which are not sufficiently widespread to allow the devalorisation required to engender «recovery». On the contrary, the crisis is deepening and speeches on the «recovery» only refer to a «technical recovery», i.e. a cyclical recovery corresponding to the short cycle of Capital, itself determined by a relative renovation of fixed capital; it is therefore a short term phenomenon that will last as long as proletarians continue to accept increasing poverty(6).

It is the proletariat's apathy that enables the bourgeoisie to put some of us on the dole, while stepping up the pace for those still doing paid hard labour. With this kind of growth, the absolute misery of proletarians becomes generalised. Infact, the only time when the bourgeoisie can count on a fruitful and longterm valorisation is following generalised war: the period of «reconstruction». It is a privileged time for the investment and circulation of capital on a large scale, but which, for our

class, signifies an ever-increasing rise in relative misery (relative to the wealth we produce).

Reconstruction then gives way to crisis (crisis of overproduction of capital) that can only be resolved by another generalised war, thus closing the circle of death imposed by value.

We do not defend any of the phases of this system, all periods of which reproduce inhumanity and for which war is the only solution.

We are not making a moralistic critique of «nasty capitalists» who are too selfish to share the fruits of their labour with the «poor exploited proletarians». No way! We know that it is Value and its cycle that impose themselves as much on the bourgeoisie as on the proletariat.

The so-called «recovery», drummed into us on a daily basis, holds nothing good in store for us proletarians. Today, just as yesterday and as always in this system of death, we can only look forward to more tears, more bloodshed, more sweat... as much on the front of wage labour as on those of the next generalised war.

Let's drown this «recovery», presented like a fragile baby, in its own bathwater!

Let's refuse all sacrifices!  
The economy is ill.  
Let's help it to die along  
with all its defenders!

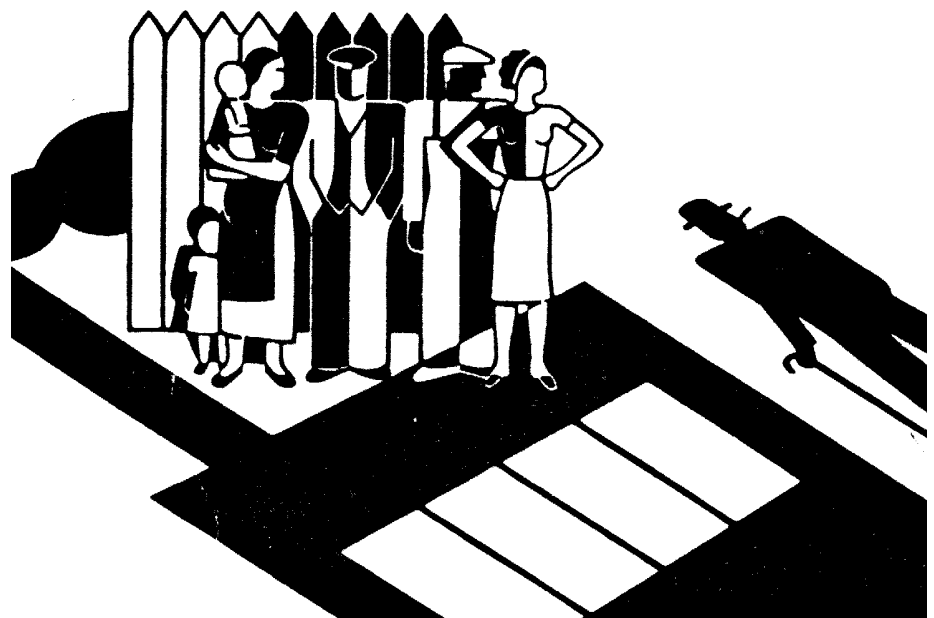
By sabotaging the «recovery», we are uncompromisingly fighting for our class interests!

(Picture)

So, business is business!... Well, I'd also like to do some business and I will start by doing you in!

paying proletarians, the only aim of the capitalist class is to extort surplus-value from them.

6. This is one of the aims pursued by the bourgeoisie with their mythical «recovery»: to show us our immediate future through rose-tinted glasses and thus to make us accept our ever- worsening living conditions.



# An invariant position of the communists: **DOWN WITH LABOUR !**

«Political economy conceals the estrangement in the nature of labour by ignoring the direct relationship between the worker (labour) and production. It is true that labour produces marvels for the rich, but it produces privation for the worker. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It produces beauty, but deformity for the worker. It replaces labour by machines, but it casts some of the workers back into barbarous forms of labour and turns others into machines. It produces intelligence, but it produces idiocy and cretinism for the worker.

The direct relationship of labour to its products is the relationship of the worker to the objects of his production. The relationship of the rich man to the objects of production and to production itself is only a consequence of this first relationship, and confirms it. Later, we shall consider this second aspect. Therefore, when we ask what is the essential relationship of labour, we are asking about the relationship of the worker to production.

Up to now, we have considered the estrangement, the alienation of the worker, only from one aspect -- i.e., his relationship to the products of his labour. But estrangement manifests itself not only in the result, but also in the act of production, within the activity of production itself. How could the product of the worker's activity confront him as something alien if it were not for the fact that in the act of production he was estranging himself from himself? After all, the product is simply the resume of the activity, of the production. So if the product of labour is alienation, production itself must be active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation. The estrangement of the object of labour merely summarizes the estrangement, the alienation in the activity of labour itself.

What, then, constitutes the alienation of labour?

Firstly, the fact that labour is external to the worker -- i.e., does not belong to his essential being; that he, therefore, does not confirm himself in his work, but denies himself, feels miserable and not happy, does not develop free mental and physical energy, but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind. Hence, the worker feels himself only when he is not working; when he is working, he does not feel himself. He is at home when he is not working, and not at home when he is working. His labour is, therefore, not voluntary but forced, it is forced labour. It is, therefore, not the satisfaction of a need but a mere means to satisfy needs outside itself. Its alien character is clearly demonstrated by the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, it is shunned like the plague. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Finally, the external character of labour for the worker is demonstrated by the fact that it belongs not to him but to another, and that in it he belongs not to himself but to another. Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, the human brain, and the human heart, detaches itself from the individual and reappears as the alien activity of a god or of a devil, so the activity of the worker is not his own spontaneous activity. It belongs to another, it is a loss of his self.

The result is that man (the worker) feels that he is acting freely only in his animal functions -- eating, drinking, and procreating, or at most in his dwelling and adornment, etc.-- and in his human functions he no longer feels to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal.

It is true that eating, drinking, and procreating, etc., are also genuine human functions. However, when abstracted from other aspects of human activity, and turned into final and exclusive ends, they are animal.

We have considered the act of estrangement of practical human activity, of labour, from two aspects: 1°) the relationship of the worker to the product of labour as an alien object that has power over him. The relationship is, at the same time, the relationship to the sensuous external world, to natural objects, as an alien world confronting him, in hostile opposition. 2°) The relationship of labour to the act of production within labour. This relationship is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something which is alien and does not belong to him, activity as passivity [Leiden], power as impotence, procreation as emasculation, the worker's own physical and mental energy, his personal life -- for what is life but activity? -- as an activity directed against himself, which is independent of him and does not belong to him. Here we have self-estrangement, as compared with the estrangement of the object [Sache] mentioned above.»

Extract from the chapter on «Estranged Labour»,

from the 1844 Manuscripts by Karl Marx.



# On the praise of work



## Bourgeois Rhetoric

The more society falls apart the more it praises work through its media(1). It is, in fact, not at all rare to see heads of state, trade-unionists,... devoting a lot of their hot air to the subject of work. They explain to us that «work is necessary», that «we must build a hardworking nation», that «we cannot live without work», that «there needs to be an increase in productivity», «to rebuild the country (or to make it more competitive...)), etc.

Moreover, in general, it is usually those who do not work who make these kind of speeches. First of all because, in principle, social rules forbid singing one's own praises. Secondly, if such speeches were to be made by a worker it would be the equivalent of him wanting to create and perfect the instrument of torture (work is torture!) that his own torturer imposes on him. Finally, this kind of speech corresponds to capital's need to maintain proletarians as mere workers(2), subsisting to work, sweating out surplus value and devoting the rest of their «lives» to reconstituting their labour force... in order to keep on working.

Far beyond the individual speaker, the discourse around «long live work» is maintained by capital, this social monster, the single true subject of this society. Indeed, capital is not only value valorising itself, a social relationship of the exploitation of wage labour: as value in process it has subsumed man and has turned him into the executor of its own interests. In this way, capital transforms itself into the supreme subject of society, simultaneously transforming its executors into mere puppets(3).

When any boss, any G.W.Bush, any Putin, any company director or trade-union leader makes this speech it corresponds entirely to his own interests. Capital is speaking, so to say, through its own mouth.

«Work», «Increase your pace of work», «Work makes you free»(4), «Long live the heroes of work», are all slogans which constitute the real and complete interests of the social class which lives off the extortion of surplus value and which has organised itself into «national», «socialist» or «popular» states... Its participation in surplus value is directly related to its ability to manage capital or, what amounts to the

1. This text is a translation of a text written in 1982. It was published in issue number 12 of *Comunismo*, our central review in Spanish and issue number 34 of *Communisme*, our central review in French.

2. «It goes without saying that the proletarian, that is to say he who, without capital or land income, lives only from labour, a unilateral and abstract labour, is only taken into consideration by political economy in as much as he is a worker. Thus, in principle, it establishes that the worker, like a horse, must earn enough in order to be able to work. It does not consider him during the time in which he is not working, as a man, but leaves the care of him to the criminal justice system, to the doctors, to religion, to statistical tables, to politics and to public charity.» (Marx in «Paris Manuscripts»)

3. «... On the one hand, the capitalist governs the worker by way of capital and, on the other hand, the power of capital governs the capitalist himself.» (Marx)

4. See «Arbeit macht frei» below.

Capital can only exist and persist by continuously changing itself into even more capital.

same thing, in its capacity to control the working class. What it boils down to is that the best capitalists are those who can best assure the reproduction of wage labour. The real owners of the productive forces (the bourgeoisie) decide on their use economically and the most capable among them are those who succeed in making the wage slave feel content with his slavery.

### The Useful Idiot

**S**ome people assert that the reality is different when the speech is made by a wage slave, a worker. Nothing could be further from the truth. When a poor and miserable worker cheers work he is betraying his class, renouncing its immediate and historic interests and, as a result, it is unable to constitute itself as the proletarian class against capital. Strictly speaking, he is a useful idiot(5) who continues to maintain and develop work and who, no matter what his intentions, objectively contributes to the development and intensification of the exploitation of the whole of the proletariat.

It is all the more important for capital to have a worker extolling the virtue of work, because, as an idiot, he is even more useful in convincing other workers to resign themselves to work and exploitation. From the point of view of class struggle, his position is, without doubt, on the side of capital. In objectively acting for an increase in the relationship between surplus value and variable capital (thus positioning himself against the immediate interests of the working class in the struggle against the rate of exploitation)(6) he is globally defending alienated work, the very foundation of this society of exploitation of man by man; in doing so, he places himself against the historical interests of the proletariat.

This speech remains essentially bourgeois, not only because it serves

capital, but also because it is made by capital, despite emanating from the mouth of an intermediary.

In its own process of worldwide industrialisation, in the procreation of its characteristic wealth and poverty, capital itself increasingly develops the technical means to make its slaves work, to enable them to increase their output, to leave their lives behind in things which are, after all, their non-property, an alienated world of things which oppose, exploit and oppress them.

New methods, new machines, functional music, climbing the party ladder, trade-unionist and political speeches, control of time and movement, promotion within the union, «long live work» (even if stated by workers themselves!)... all signify: everything for increased and improved exploitation.

Capital has perfected itself and its methods for intensifying exploitation. To this end, there is nothing more useful than a worker who shouts «Let's work!». In doing so, the worker reveals himself to be no more than a carthorse, a beast of burden expending brute, general, indifferent, abstract energy which is transformed into an oppressive power, into capital, which

5. The word «idiot» comes from the Greek and referred to someone who did not preoccupy himself with, knew nothing about or who was not interested in the affairs of the «polis» (city), that is politics, thus, by its disinterest, aiding the tyrants. This is the case for workers who are disinterested in the politics of their class and thus are the tyrants' best aides.

6. We can see the indissociable unity of the immediate and historical interests of the working class, which the whole of revisionism has desperately tried to falsify by separating them.

7. The formation and development of



again demands fresh blood from this same beast of burden to create more capital. This process demands even more work, more muscular effort and, in turn, this new capital needs to feed on life's blood in order to make even more capital, intensifying the effort of its own stooges. It is impossible to ceaselessly renew capital without necessarily killing proletarians at work. Capital can only exist and persist by continuously changing itself into even more capital. As the enlarged reproduction of the exploitation of work, it is a pressing need for capital, for its essence of dead labour, to kill living labour so that it becomes more capital. It is this that drives it. It has to pile up corpses and mountains of objects with no other use but destruction, which is, after all, just a double way of accumulating dead labour. Capital can do nothing else but become more capital by using work, by accumulating it as dead labour, and, notably, by making use of useful idiots who idolise it in shouting «long live work!»...The only way in which this infernal cycle can end is by dictatorship against capital and its society of wage slavery.

### The struggle against work

**T**he exploited, submitted to work by violence, have risen up against it and against the conditions of its realisation since time immemorial. Throughout history no one has worked because he wanted to work, but because he is obliged to, be it by the whip, by religion, by blood and fire and/or because he is violently separated from the property of his means of life (fundamentally the same thing). All of the exploited, whether slaves, serfs, indigenous people subjected to «being discovered» or modern proletarians,... have struggled tirelessly against work. Rebellions, escapes, partial or general

insurrections have always had closely linked causes:

- struggle to improve the quality of the means of life and to appropriate a less miserable part of the social product
- struggle against the pace and intensity of work
- struggle against lengthening the working day and for its reduction
- struggle against exploitation to build another kind of society

All of this can be summed up as struggle for living better, or simply, struggle for human life. It is struggle against those societies imposing torture and work, struggle to work as little as possible (as much in length of time as in intensity), struggle to appropriate the greatest possible quantity of the social product.

These demands were not abandoned with the formation and development of the proletariat and its historical Party(7), but were developed and made more precise. Communism, as a movement of the organised proletariat, struggles for the general reduction of work to its minimum expression (in both extension and intensity) and for the appropriation of the social product by the proletariat. However, it openly declares that these demands can only be really and fully met by the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat which will lead the world against all current norms (dictatorship against exchange value) according to the needs of a developing humanity. Against all bourgeois socialisms which claim that work is inherent to human beings and conceive socialism as a simple process taking goods from the «rich» and distributing them amongst the «poor», communism establishes not only the need to revolutionise distribution (after all, merely a consequence indissociably linked with production), but also to destroy the very foundations of the mode of production. Thus it fundamentally revolutionises the very objective of

Communism, as a movement of the organised proletariat, struggles for the general reduction of work to its minimum expression (in both extension and intensity) and for the appropriation of the social product by the proletariat.

which obviously includes as much the highest points of its constitution into a class and therefore as a political party (revolutionary phase), as the moments of maximal disorganisation, dispersion and atomisation (counter-revolutionary phase).

8. Criticising the first point of the program

production, so that it is no longer determined by the rate of profit but by the improvement of life, in order to lighten work and thus to work less. This implies the liquidation of money, mercantilism, and wage labour. Only this destruction can create the basis upon which work will no longer be work, so that productive activity in general can be reintegrated into the very life of man.

The development of capitalism is the simultaneous and contradictory development of the bourgeoisie and counter-revolution on one side and the proletariat and its programme on the other. Struggle against work, for the appropriation of the social product, for revolution, is generated by capital, at the same time generating the development and strengthening of the reaction. Each reduction in labour time has been compensated for by increases in the productivity of work and through greater intensity: in the workshop, the factory, on the assembly line, by Taylorism... and by «new methods in work management». The development of the social-democratic parties and parties of labour, bourgeois trade-unionism, labourism and more recently Stalinism, national-socialism, populism (in all of its variations, including Peronism, Castrism,...) was simultaneous and in perfect accordance with this process. The whole of the bourgeois forces and parties take the praise of work as the ideological centre of their campaigns in order to contain the workers and thus have them at their

service.  
The development of parties of work

The bourgeoisie's praise of work constituted itself into a party from the middle of the last century onwards.



Up until then bourgeois parties for workers were just called «popular», but from then on, the bourgeois currents most able to contain workers called themselves «socialist parties», «workers parties», «social-democratic parties» and «labour parties»...

Lasalle's party, German social-democracy and, later on, all of international social-democracy, were classic examples of bourgeois parties (in their programme, their life, their actions...). These parties were primarily made up

of the social-democrat party (1. «Labor is the source of wealth and all culture»), Marx said «Labor is not the source of all wealth. Nature is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labor, which itself is only a manifestation of the force of nature, human labor power. The above phrase is to be found in all children's primers and is correct insofar as it is implied that labor is performed with the appurtenant subjects and instruments. But a socialist program cannot allow such bourgeois phrases to pass over in silence the conditions that lone give them meaning. And in so far as man from the beginning behaves towards nature, the primary source of all instruments and subjects of labor, as an owner, treats her as belonging to him, his labor becomes the source of use values, therefore also of wealth. The bourgeois have very good grounds for falsely ascribing supernatural creative power to labor, since precisely from the fact that labor depends on nature it follows that the man who possesses no other property than is labor power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labor. He can only work with their permission, hence live only with their permission»

Marx,  
«Critique of the Gotha Programme».

9. See Marx's critique which relates to this in «Critique of the Gotha Programme», as well as in the Marx's and Engels' correspondence with Bebel, Kautsky, etc, during the same period.

of workers and made the praise of work and workers the fundamental point of their programme. The bourgeois ideology of work as the source of all wealth(8) was both the centrepiece of the theory and the objective of the party and of socialism. The «emanci-

subversive and revolutionary in Marx's work, thus creating what was called (and still is today) «Marxism» - the most repugnant praise of work and of workers that exists.

Little by little, the things that Marx's work referred to as being disastrous, such as the being of the worker and work, and which had been denounced as being the pinnacle of brutalisation, of inhumanity, of baseness... became a necessity, an honour for «Marxists» across the globe. In the name of the workers, these labour parties made the propaganda that work is synonymous with man's realisation («work sets Man free»). There is only a short step from this to Hitler and Stalin's labour camps.

And this step was easily made following the defeat of the international revo-

lution of '17-'23. In Russia itself, a real army of work was consolidated as the counter-revolution imposed the liquidation of the revolutionary proletariat and its communist vanguard. On the basis of the social-democratic theory defended by Lenin according to which the development of capitalism is a real advance towards revolution, everything was subordinated to capitalist production, to wage labour. However, the National capitalist State demands competitiveness and it became neces-



pation of work» was declared as a slogan, always accompanied by others such as «for the constitution of a free and popular state»(9). In the same way that the more the state frees itself, the more it oppresses civil society, the emancipation of work can only signify the fortification of capitalism (10).

After Marx's death, social-democracy tried to make itself «Marxist», without fundamentally changing its Lassallian programme (praise of work). It suppressed and falsified everything

10. Capital is precisely the realised emancipation of work, the liberation of work from its inseparable character in relation to the one who produced it as activity. If work were only a productive activity, it would be indissociably linked to this activity, and in other words, would be an integral part of and a slave to the being of the «worker». However, under capitalism, this emancipation is produced, because the process of work is dominated by the process of valorisation, because the very realisation of work is its negation as activity and what is left of it is thingified work. Moreover, work has emancipated itself to such a degree that it oppresses the one who realises it. And, far from representing the power of the class which, for generations, has given it its life, today it is, as dead labour, the emancipated force which the enemy class uses to perpetuate exploitation. What must be called for is therefore not the emancipation of work - we must emancipate ourselves from work! In the first conception, work is the force which emancipates itself. In our conception, it is man who emancipates himself from work.

11. Taylor was a bourgeois who was extremely lucid about his class interests. In order to understand all the subterfuges that our class uses to work as little as possible, he worked as a worker for a good while and, on the basis of this, developed a series of norms to eliminate «dead time». His science consisted of controlling time and movement, to make the administration of work scientific, to promote methods of «retribution» of workers, thus increasing competitiveness between them, so that only workers would remain and the «layabouts» would be forced to find work elsewhere, etc.

12. «Learning to work is the task that the power of the soviets must expose to the people to its full extent. Capitalism's last word on this subject is the Taylor system, which links all the progress of capitalism, the refined cruelty of bourgeois exploi-

Stalin's regime, had exactly the same programme and fundamentally realised the same as the national-socialism of his old ally Hitler fundamentally because they based the management of society on a national project of socialism.

tation, with the most precious scientific conquests (for Lenin, as for every vulgar materialist, science is neutral - Ed) relating to the analysis of mechanical movements in work, the suppression of superfluous and clumsy movements, the introduction of the best systems of accounting and of control, etc. The Republic of the Soviets must make its own the precious conquests of science and technology in this field, whatever it costs. We can realise socialism precisely in the sense that we will be capable of combining the power of the soviets and the soviet system of management with the most recent progress of capitalism. It is necessary to organise the study and teaching of the Taylor system in Russia, its experimentation and its systematic adaptation». (Lenin in «The immediate tasks of the Soviet power»- 1918).

13. The name came from a Stalinist mine worker famous for his physical ability, like a human beast, to work, in the same length of time, far more than his work «comrades» (supposing that they considered him as such) and who was adopted as a hero, an example. In reality, capitalism has no other ideal of the working man than the Stakhanovs.

14. Adolf Hitler - «Mein Kampf». Hitler added that it is «the most important grammatical point».

15. Konstantin Hierl, Nazi chief Minister of Work.

16. It is evident that all of the bourgeoisie make an apology of work, but here we are taking the most representative sectors of this apology by capital, the govern-

sary to apply the most modern methods for exploiting workers. Taylorism(11) denounced by Lenin prior to the insurrection as «the slavery of man by machine», came to be considered by Lenin as an administrator of capital and the state, as a panacea. Thus, a prisoner of social-democratic ideology, he did not consider the increase in the intensity of work to be the most anticommunist act conceivable, but as neutral, just as able to serve socialism as capitalism(12).

This masterpiece of the submission to work at a forced rhythm, which reached paranoid levels in Russia, was directed by the great leaders of Bolshevism - Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Stalin... They showed themselves to be the most bloodthirsty in the application of new rhythms and methods that capitalism needed for its reorganisation in Russia: Zinoviev turned into a bloodthirsty dog in Petrograd, organising open repression of any struggle against work and the state. Trotsky was the flag-bearer of the militarisation of work, of the creation of forced labour camps and was the leader of forces of repression during decisive moments... Finally Stalin (later accused of everything!) brought this work to its highest point with the labour camps, through which more than 15,000,000 workers passed. And to represent the leadership of a society in which capital liquidated all forms of struggle against exploitation, for the first time (and simultaneously with Germany, Italy, etc.) «working» and especially «working at an exemplary rhythm» were transformed, along with Stalin himself, into an idol, a God, a sacred and untouchable beast. It was the sinister reign of the Stakhanovs(13).

### Stalinism, Nazism, Castrism

**C**apitalism and its public opinion conceal the decisive contradictions (communism-capitalism) and,

in their place, present an ensemble of false contradictions (such as «fascism-antifascism») which we regularly denounce. Despite the fact that various fractions of the bourgeoisie raise different flags during imperialist capitalist war (which is only the extension of competitiveness), their programme is essentially the same. Fascism and antifascism represent the same kind of society: capitalism or, more precisely, capitalism reforming itself following the most important revolutionary wave in the history of the proletariat, imposing the biggest and most impressive counter-revolution, the reality of which we suffer to this day.

Contrary to what they want us to believe, Stalin's regime, as national socialism, had exactly the same programme and fundamentally realised the same as the national-socialism of his old ally Hitler, not according to whether or not they coincided in certain periods of national or international politics, but fundamentally because they based the management of society on a national project of socialism. The central ideology is work, in a party of work. Clearly there were subtle differences in their speeches. Hitler based his rise to power on the defence of a socialism struggling «against international financial and usury capital(14), against government, plutocracy and for a true socialism of the German nation». Stalin preferred to say that his socialism (in one country) struggled against «capitalist countries» and for «popular democracies». But Stalin's programme concentrated just as much as Hitler's on an enormous effort of labour, on heavy industry, and more particularly, on the infrastructure of communications, energy and on construction «for the working people». At the centre of each of these regimes were the Work Services, the labour camps, the praise of work, and obligation to work, presented as an honour:

«The obligatory work service ought

to be an honour for the youth and a service put forward for the people. It should neither provide economic manpower to private industry nor be converted into a company competing with the state. It should provide an army of workers who will successfully undertake public works for economic, cultural, and more so, national political ends.»(15)

Today in the face of a situation in which every regime calls for more work whilst eating less «in the name of the workers» (especially in places where a party of national socialism, a party of work(16) is at the head of the state, such as in Cuba for example) it is very important to make it clear that there is nothing fundamentally original about this policy compared to its predecessors, Stalinism and Nazism. This is why we must emphasize the latter, undoubtedly less well-known than the others. Nazism is not just one example of a party of work amongst others. It is, without doubt, the most perfected of its kind, which its ashamed successors (because they cannot acknowledge it) can do little more than imitate (whether they know it or not).

In reality there is nothing at all original in Fidel Castro's works and speeches; not even when he asserts that his party represents the struggle of manual and intellectuals producers against the bourgeoisie, nor in his claims that the access that workers have to power (represented, of course, by the socialist party) has won them the possibility of administering the affairs of the state.

«The political bourgeoisie has been expelled from the political stage. In its place, advance the manual and intellectual producers, the forces of Labour (Arbeitertum), to begin their historical mission. It is not simply a matter of wages and hours -though we must not fail to realise that these demands are essential, perhaps the singlemost im-

portant manifestation of the socialist will. More important is the integration of a potent, responsible social body in the affairs of the state, perhaps indeed even taking over the dominant role in the political future of our fatherland.»

This is not a speech by Fidel Castro, but by the famous Nazi Goebbels who, with as much cynicism as the other, is not afraid to add :

«We are not a charitable institution but a socialist party of revolutionaries»(17).

In what follows we refer almost exclusively to the Nazis. It is not necessary to make an explicit parallel with every example through quotes and references to the «realisations» of socialists. Every reader should be able to find in his own surroundings some such socialists and Castrists who have been striving to imitate the Nazis for the past five decades.

All of the propaganda of the Nazi regime was based on the benefits, according to them, that the working people would obtain with this regime. It especially emphasised the complete elimination of unemployment which would oppose «the decadence of corrupt capitalism». When France was occupied, it went from greater than 6 million unemployed to a systematic recruitment of «voluntary» workers outside Germany, to make up for the lack of labour force. In reality this supposed «elimination of unemployment» was no more nor less than an obligation for the unemployed to work, a general situation throughout the world which was applied with varying success by the whole of capital, from Stalin to Roosevelt. It was a generalised acknowledgement of the need to resort to policies of public spending (later theorised by Keynes), major construction, intense militarisation of the economy, all the way up to imperialist war. For the German worker, as for any other worker upon whom capitalist work is imposed when

Nazism is, without doubt, the most perfected of its kind, which its ashamed successors (because they cannot acknowledge it) can do little more than imitate (whether they know it or not).

ments and parties in which work and the «heroes of work» were at the centre of all the economic and social policy.

17. Quotation from «The Brown Revolution», by Davis Schoenbaum, (pages 51 and 52).

18. It must be taken into account that the massive internment of workers in camps was done under in the full view and the full knowledge of the worldwide bourgeoisie and that there was no lack of bourgeois organisations, including Jewish ones, contributing to this criminal business.

capitalism only has unemployment to offer, the work is then badly paid, regimented, militarised and leads him to war and death. At the time, things were presented differently. The poor blokes who went to the camps(18) spoke of leaving happily to escape unemployment and decadence, to go «to work»! The Nazis based their campaigns on «concrete»

deeds, on buildings for the workers, on houses and resorts for tourism for the workers, on wiping out illiteracy and on popular education, etc. The fact that numerous Latin-American, or other, socialists have appropriated these tasks as the socialist programme only helps to show how things are!

The programme of the National Socialist Party wanted to «give a Fatherland to the German worker, to build wholesome housing with air and light and sun for the vigorous youth»(19), and the Gramma or the Barricada(20) of the time, called *Völkische Beobachter*, aimed to bring «concrete»(21) elements for building houses and «modern workers' neighbourhoods», with «new installations in the workers' neighbourhoods», etc. In

its regular column entitled «Socialism in Deeds» this newspaper presented the classic demagogic bullshit of useful idiots in the service of the state. David Schoenbaum gives an example of the contents of this column with the following(22):

«They related that the employees of a textile factory in the South of Germany had volunteered to put in extra hours and to put the product of their work into a Nazi-sponsored fund to aid victims of industrial accidents... that farmers had offered the Hitler Youth vacation lodgings for fifty thousand children and the National Socialist Women's organization of Mannheim had distributed seven hundred more... Dresden municipal employees had created funds to finance a squadron of five airplanes

for the Sax Statthalter (governor) to help SA and SS men out of financial difficulties and how they contributed 1% of their salaries - that is, accepted a voluntary cut - for the «promotion of the national effort»... Other examples in the same series included the completion of a suburban housing project and partial distribution of profits amongst



19. As shown in the leaflets of CE-DADE, the Barcelona Nazi organisation.

20. Official newspapers of «realised Socialism» in Cuba and «in the process of realisation» in Nicaragua respectively.

21. There is no doubt that it is precisely this area of the «concrete», of the «particular» and of «the solution to everyone's problems» that lends itself best to official demagoguery and to the generalised lies on which a regime founds its propaganda.

22. See Schoenbaum's book, as above, pages 84 and 85. This is anecdotal and it may seem absurd to include it here. However, readers will recognise in these «concrete examples of socialism», as much in their form as in their content, more than one of their enemy's speeches.

23. *ibid.*

24. We cannot resist the pleasure of submitting the reader to the two following quotations which illustrate the tremendous similarity which existed between the Stalinist apology and the Nazi praise of culture:

«Culture is the highest expression of the creative forces of a people. It is the artist



employees by Erich Kohl's Prussische Zeitung... At Christmas in 1933, Party officials erected tables in the streets of proletarian North Berlin to distribute presents to all, including former communists (!!!-Ed.). 'This is the socialism I was looking for' (No, despite how it looks, these declarations were not made by Fidel Castro- Ed.), 'and it was an honour to have served it with every fibre of my being,' wrote Goebbel's adjutant Schaumberg-Lippe»(23).

In the same way, under Nazism, campaigns for popular culture were intensified, the whole education system was changed and modernised. Access to education was generalised and presented, as in other cases, as a synonym for human liberation and for Socialism. Indeed, it was about reorganising the labour forces so that they would better serve capitalism, so that all could obtain «the culture»(24); it was about promoting technical and professional careers; it was particularly a question of profound brainwashing to subject the worker even more intensely as a useful idiot to the national state and to its interests. Those who were accepted and obtained their diplomas, those who showed their haste to be the most servile vassals, were treated like heroes:

«The laureates were regarded as champions of the Olympic games or

as movie stars, they were very ceremoniously taken to Berlin and photographed next to Ley and Hitler in person.»(25)

This «social promotion» was obviously accompanied by an intense publicity campaign. In the press there were abundant examples of workers who, up until the day before, had not known where they would spend the



«Arbeit macht Frei»

night, of sacked «peasants» who had nothing. There is no need to emphasise the melodramatics with which such personal situations were described by the press «before» and «after» they had «triumphed». Schoenbaum commented:

«Given that half of the laureates came from families of waged workers and that 80% of them had not reached the level of secondary education, the

who is the inspired interpreter of this culture. It would be insane to think that his divine mission could be accomplished outside the people. He only exists as part of the people and the energy necessary for his existence comes from the people.»

Goebbels, in Speech of the Inauguration of the National Chamber of Culture, 1933.

«Our culture is a popular culture. The cultural workers must serve the people with the greatest devotion: they must link themselves to the masses and not cut themselves off from them. To establish a liaison with the masses, we must conform to their needs, to their desires.»

Mao Tse Tung, in The Unified Front in cultural work - 1944.

25. Schoenbaum, *ibid.*

26. Schoenbaum, *ibid.*

27. CEDADE leaflet.

28. Schoenbaum, *ibid.*

29. If certain regimes have not been given as an example here, like Castrism, this is because Castro, contrary to Hitler, came from the Cuban 'high bourgeoisie' and prefers to keep quiet about this. What

is certain is that the bourgeoisie never loses the opportunity to confuse the issue whenever possible, by making the class origin, the extraction, shine as if it were the guarantee of something. In reality, as the Hitler-Castro example illustrates, it is not class extraction which is decisive, but real practice either in favour of or against the regime of wage slavery.

30. Speech held at the Siemens factory in November 1933.

31. «In fact the 'programme of socialisation' that the social-democrats would never dare to realise when they were in power, was realised to a great extent by the fascists. In the same way that the demands of the German bourgeoisie were not satisfied in 1848, but later, by the counter-revolution that followed, social-democracy's programme was accomplished by Hitler. In effect, it was Hitler, and not social-democracy, which declared the 1st of May a holiday, and in a general way, it is enough to compare what the socialists said they wanted to realise, but what they would never realise, with the policies put into practice in Germany from 1933 onwards, in order to realise that Hitler really did accomplish the programme of social-democracy without resorting to its services.» Paul Mattick in «Capitalist Integration and Working Class Rupture.»

32. The military regime in Uruguay, which built the worst of its concentration camps under the name «Liberty», did not even overtake the cynicism of Nazism.

33. Schoenbaum, page 109. The underlinings are our own.

34. Since the industrial revolutions after the «Second» World War, the physical strength of the worker is much less important today and, little by little, the image of the worker, the model of national fascists and socialists of this time, has adapted itself to this evolution, incorporating a more common type of man and woman.

35. Declaration by Adolf Hitler, quoted by CEDADE.

36. These tourist ocean-liners served to transport troops and the Volkswagens served as military vehicles for general use. This was the same for the motorways, which were the first in the world and which were used for the transport of troops and

regime succeeded, at least in this way, in making a spectacular glorification of the working classes through its propaganda.»(26).

Like any other cynical socialist in the government of a capitalist state, Hitler presented himself as the example of a worker. He had his picture taken whilst doing «voluntary work», as «number 1 in the labour camps». Bearded bourgeois cutting sugar cane aren't very original in this respect either. The leaflets distributed by CEDADE today have pictures of masses of muscular workers marching resolutely with their shovels and other work tools on one cover and Hitler surrounded by soldiers, setting the example with shovel in hand, digging the ground, accompanied by a few refrains of the song from the Work Front «our shovels are arms of peace», on the other(27).

All of this «...undifferentiated glorification of 'the worker'» was based on an incessant call for social mobility, with an aggressive emphasis on social egalitarianism»(28). As in any other field, the example of Hitler was given. In any regime of work there's nothing better than to show that its best representative is a worker who comes from the «working class». In this, Hitler won first prize(29). In the national-socialist party a real catechism was recited:

«What professions did Adolph Hitler practice?»

Answer: «Adolph Hitler was a construction worker, an artist, and a student.» Whenever he could (and when his audience requested him to!) Hitler would recall his quality of «exemplary and persevering worker»:

«In my youth, I too was a worker, slowly working my way up through industry, study and I think I can say, through hunger as well.»(30).

The real transformation of the 1st of May into a day of work, into a day of celebration, despite it having risen up as a symbol of struggle against capital, was naturally the work of the Nazis.

In this case, as in many others, Hitler carried out the programme which the bourgeois socialists, the social-democrats, had always promised(31). The big parades and festivals that we see everywhere today to celebrate the repugnant servitude of workers towards the national state (quite the opposite of the revolutionary heroes of Chicago) cannot be considered to be the invention of Stalin, Mao, Perón, or Fidel Castro at all, but indeed the work of Hitler.

Indisputably, the regime's main slogans were: «Arbeit adelt» («work ennobles») and «Arbeit mach frei» («Work liberates», «Man liberates himself by working»). To crown it all, «ARBEIT MACHT FREI»(32) appeared in giant letters on the gates of the biggest concentration camp, Auschwitz. This was not black humour, but real belief in a rotten system, capitalism decomposing, in a system which leads man to his extreme loss, to the total sacrifice of his life on the altar of God Work, to death.

«... the Third Reich offered a labour ideology, combining simultaneous and roughly equal appeals to pride, patriotism, idealism... The centrepiece was the ethos of work, focusing not so much on the worker as on work itself... As in Josef Thorak's colossal design for an autobahn monument, three egregiously muscled giants heaving Sisyphus-like at an enormous rock, work was a favoured theme of official art. Larger factories even erected chapels whose main aisle led to a Hitler bust beneath the symbol of the Labour Front, flanked by heroic-sized worker figures; in effect, little temples to the National Socialist God of Work.»(33)

That is to say, as for Stalin or so many of his current successors, the worker hero isn't the one who struggles against his own condition, who conspires and, as such, exists as he has always presented himself throughout history, big or small, with or without glasses, woman or man, in overalls or



wearing a tie, immigrant or «national», old or young, fat or thin,... instead they present the worker as a working beast, as he who holds up the whole regime with the strength of his arms, muscle bound, exactly the same character that all regimes of forced work make fashionable (macho, young, strong, national, nationalist, worker(34)). Commercials throughout the world also issue this same archetype of the young, handsome, strong worker bursting with health.

Along with the idealisation of work has to come certain crumbs and organisation of free time, so that workers are always in a good enough condition to carry on working courageously, as there is no other way of maintaining the highest pace of intensity of work and thus of exploitation. The Nazis were once again the masters of all the workerist-socialists, including Stalin. They created

a special organisation, «Kraft durch Freude», known as KdF, that is, «Force through joy», through relaxation. This organisation, which was financed by the funds of dissolved trade-unions, had an undeniable success in the containment of workers. Its activity programme was quite vast: theatre plays, seminars, cultural events, subsidised sports groups, folk and modern dance clubs, adult education, art displays, cinema clubs, etc.

Hitler could brag about maintaining all of the myths which allow an important increase in exploitation in his nationalist socialism:

«The people work decisively and cheerfully and they know that they are not committing themselves to a struggle for the capital of a few egoists, but for the good of the collective»(35).

The KdF's biggest success was its tourist organisation for workers. Here too, all subsequent patriotic workers and socialists are simply vulgar imitations. The KdF managed to organise the free time of millions of workers by sending them on organised vacations (one doesn't need much imagination to guess what they were like) and led the tourist trade, with the help of subsidies, to an expansion unprecedented in the world. Its expansion, provoked by the needs of industrial capital, were favourably redirected into industry, in that KdF gave a boost to the transportation industry through the building of two enormous ocean liners and the development of the automobile industry, named KdFwagen, and later Volkswagen. As we know, all of this directly served the war preparations and later the war itself(36).

Nazism sowed the illusion of the disappearance of classes through its promise to popularise cars (which, in the most part, remains largely nominal) and especially through tourism, both of which at the time, were considered to be signs of richness, an exclusively

Along with the idealisation of work has to come certain crumbs and organisation of free time, so that workers are always in a good enough condition to carry on working courageously, as there is no other way of maintaining the highest pace of intensity of work and thus of exploitation.

armoured cars.

37. In the 1980's, the French socialist government considered the creation of a real ministry of free time to be very original.

38. These quotations of Ley are from Schoenbaum's book (pp132,133,134).

39. Schoenbaum, *ibid.*

40. When it is transformed into the action of an entire factory it is already exceptional (as has happened many times in the past). When it goes beyond these barriers and spreads to the whole of society, revolution cannot be stopped.

bourgeois possibility. This enormous and absurd lie, propagated by all of the important representatives of the regime, was none the less profoundly rooted in German society. On the subject of tourism R. Ley declared:

«The worker sees that we are serious about raising his social position. He sees that it is not the so-called 'educated classes' whom we send out as representatives of the new Germany, but himself, the German worker, whom we show to the world.»

And at the International Conference on the politics of leisure and free time(37), Ley officially declared:

«There are no longer classes in Germany. In the years to come, the worker will lose the last traces of the inferiority complexes he may have inherited from the past.»(38)

But just like any other patriotic socialist regime which seeks out the greatest exploitation and the best canon fodder for imperialist war, the leaders have a clear awareness of its objectives. Some of them, from time to time, have the courage, or the lack of consciousness, to divulge them. Thus Starcke, press officer of the Work Front, declared with the greatest casualness:

« We don't send our workers on vacation on our own ships or build them massive bathing facilities at the sea for fun, either for ourselves or for the individual who has the chance to make use of them. We do it only because we are interested in preserving the working capacity (Arbeitskraft) of the individual and in order to send him back to work strengthened and refreshed.»(39)

It is with this pearl of sincerity that we will conclude the chapter about the Nazi praise of work, a praise so similar to that made by all nationalist socialists. The reader must be sufficiently sick of this workism and national and socialist fanaticism for work. Let's return to our struggle against work!

### The issue of workers consciousness in the struggle against work

**D**espite all the speeches, anyone who can only live by selling his labour power feels that he is working because he has no other solution, that it is the only way left to him to subsist.

Therefore, he works as little as possible and, if he can, he doesn't work, or, when it is possible, works while trying to live a little bit (if this atrophied life can be called a «life»). He spends a bit longer in the toilet, smokes a cigarette, renders the machine «out of order», tries to communicate with other workers, slows down his pace, always tries - counter to the situation - to act as a human being and not as a machine, as if he could rediscover a human existence while the boss isn't looking, during the break, or while hiding out in the toilets. Some are off work whenever possible, others come down «sick», suddenly developing a bad toothache, headache or sharp pains, pains which no one can verify (it's not always made up because, sometimes, out of disgust with work, some do end up seriously hurting themselves). There is plenty of evidence that workers most often fall sick on Monday mornings and in the days immediately following holidays.

Absenteeism is becoming generalised throughout the world. Those who sabotage production are denounced, responding as best as they can to all the inventions for increasing the pace of work. In every factory and office thousands of counter-inventions are developed to counteract them...

Failing to see an obscure, but very real, struggle between the two antagonistic classes of society in these apparently unrelated acts, means closing ones eyes to it. In each of these acts there is opposition between the struggle against

work, for communist society, and the maintenance of wage slavery.

These are the indisputable, living facts which demonstrate the putrefaction of a society based on work and the hatred concentrated within each of its wage slaves... It is also a fact that «laziness» and «idleness» (after all, just timid attempts at human and intuitive resistance against work) are always considered to be crimes, without even mentioning the labour camps designated for «social parasites» or «dangerous delinquents», which in Cuba, for example, are synonymous with anyone who sabotages production.

However, in this present period of counter-revolution (which the proletariat is having a lot of trouble ridding itself of), these facts are not generalised often enough. Even those who do all they can, cheating supervisors, bosses, the state, are not capable of understanding the revolutionary significance of their own actions. In certain circumstances they not only fail to participate in the demands of the working class and in the struggle, but even see the revolutionary slogan «down with work» as meaningless. Even when they speak highly of someone else, they resort to bourgeois slogans such as «He's a good bloke, a real worker», «a model worker»...

We all come across such cases everyday of our lives, people claiming that it's all just «a lie». Despite the socially massive scope of action against work, it is carried out alone or in small groups(40). The consciousness of workers generally remains atrophied by the bourgeois ideology of work - the very players in the struggle against work condemning that struggle whenever they are clearly and openly told that they are fighting first and foremost against work.

But there's no reason to be afraid of this situation. On the contrary, it is the situation in which communists have

always struggled, against the current, against the thought and consciousness of the majorities, yet in their interests and for their action, trying to render the spontaneously occurring methods of struggle conscious. What is most important, to be distinctly subversive, is to make it clear that these isolated acts of sabotage of work, which we experience on a daily basis, contain the revolutionary power which it is necessary to liberate in order to blow this world to pieces. That is why it is urgent today not only to struggle to work less, but to shout out clearly «down with work», «long live the struggle against work!».

#### «Long live the proletariat!»

**O**ur enemies, the praisers of work, the parties of national socialism, sing work's praises, especially when they declare themselves to be Marxists. As we've seen throughout the text, in reality, the proletarian is only of interest to them as a worker. What they are really shouting is «long live the working proletariat», «long live well-disciplined workers», «long live the country's development» and, whether they say it or not, «long live the nation». This means, amongst other things, that the bourgeoisie's cheers for the proletariat are the exact opposite of the fundamental interests of the proletarian situation and translate much more clearly as «work more, tighten your belt, the nation needs you». Neither Fidel Castro nor the Sandinistas would deny this, for this is how they cheer the proletariat, whose existence they want to continue for centuries and centuries.

When revolutionaries say «long live the proletariat!» it is not simply different but the exact opposite, as much in its premises, as in its content and its consequences - as a premise because to live the proletariat must struggle. Indeed, for «Marxists» the proletariat represents the sociological sum total of

all people who work. For us, the proletariat exists in its confrontation with the bourgeoisie and this opposition exists in the general struggle for life, from the production of material objects to the organisation as a party and to armed struggle. As content, because the life of the proletariat is not found in work, the proletarian lives by acknowledging himself and his comrades as human beings and this can only be done through struggle against work. Finally, as its consequences, in that the proletariat, contrary to the bourgeoisie, has no interest in prolonging its existence as opposition to capital. Its development, up to its transformation into the dominant class, has the objective of the suppression of all classes and thus its auto-suppression.

In summary, whilst the cheers addressed to the proletariat by our enemies mean «long live the proletarians' current situation», the «long live the proletariat» of the communists signifies: «long live the organisation of the proletariat as a class, as the dominant class for its own suppression, to totally liquidate the current situation, to abolish wage labour so that productive activity can, once and for all, cease to be work and can become human life, so that humanity may at last begin its authentic history as the human community.»

What is most important, to be distinctly subversive, is to make it clear that the isolated acts of sabotage of work, which we experience on a daily basis, contain the revolutionary power which it is necessary to liberate in order to blow this world to pieces.

«If the working class were to arise in its terrible strength, tearing from its heart the vice which dominates it and degrades its nature, not to demand the Rights of Man, which are but the rights of capitalist exploitation, not to demand the Right to Work, which is but the right to misery, but to forge a brazen law forbidding any man to work more than three hours a day, the earth, the old earth, trembling with joy would feel a new universe leaping within her...»

Paul Lafargue,  
The Right to be Lazy, 1848.

«We have indeed grown puny and degenerate. Embalmed beef, potatoes, doctored wine, and Prussian Schnapps, judiciously combined with compulsory labour, have weakened our bodies and narrowed our minds. And the times when man tightens his belt and the machine enlarges its output are the very times when the economists preach Malthusian theory to us, the religion of abstinence and the dogma of work. Really, it would be better to pluck out such tongues and throw them to the dogs.»

Paul Lafargue,  
The Right to be Lazy, 1848

«Another source of the workers' immorality is that they are the damned of work. If free productive activity is the greatest pleasure which we know, forced labour is the cruellest and most degrading of tortures. Nothing is more terrible than to have to perform, from morning until evening, something which is repugnant to you. And the more a worker has human feelings, the more he must loathe his work, because he feels the constraint it implies and the uselessness that this work represents for him.»

F. Engels, *The Situation of the Working Class in England*.

«'Worry' is nothing other than the feeling of oppression and anguish which, in the bourgeoisie, necessarily accompanies work, this vile activity of needy bread-winning. 'Worry' blooms in its purest form in the brave German bourgeois : for him it is chronic and «always equal to itself», miserable, and scornful, whereas the misery of the proletarian always takes on the sharpest, violent form, forcing him to engage in a fight to the death, making him revolutionary and producing, as a result, not 'worry' but passion. Thus if communism wants to abolish the 'worry' of the bourgeois as much as the misery of the proletarian, it goes without saying that he cannot do it without abolishing the cause of both one and the other : work.»

Karl Marx,  
*The German Ideology*.

# Slogans foreign to the proletariat, Alienated workers' consciousness

Concerning slogans such as:

«Protect work»,  
«Protect the workplace»  
«Protect the company»  
«Protect the national economy»

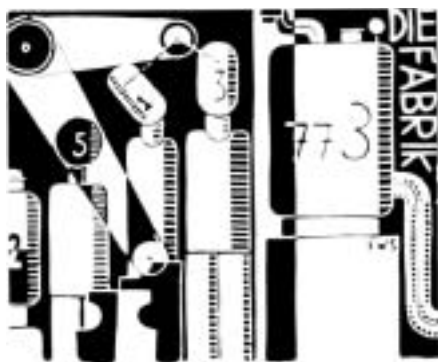
The interest of the proletariat, as a class, is clearly to appropriate the whole of the social product - both past and present - to abolish exploitation, the state, and to suppress itself as a class by abolishing all social classes.

In periods like the ones we're going through through factory, mine, or farm closures or «restructuring» based on massive unemployment are common currency. In the face of this bourgeois attack which condemns it to unemployment and thus to ever increasing misery, the proletariat can only respond by struggle, by direct action. On very many occasions this struggle for proletarian interests takes up slogans like the ones above as its banners. However, contrary to what the protagonists believe, they do not reflect the interests of the proletariat in any way, but on the contrary those of its enemies: the bourgeois.

The interest of the proletarian is to satisfy his human needs, to appropriate a less miserable share of the social product, to be less dispossessed of the product of his labour (the interest of the proletariat, as a class, is clearly to appropriate the whole of the social product - both past and present - to

abolish exploitation, the state, and to suppress itself as a class by abolishing all social classes). When the bourgeoisie gives him the sack, the proletarian is fully conscious that this separates him even more from the means of life and that, from then on, he will be even more deprived of what he needs than in the past. Revolutionary militants will always find difficulties in being able to express the interests of the class they belong to in clear, incisive, agitating slogans. This difficulty is relatively simplified when things are demanded directly, for example «bread» in revolutionary Russia, «housing» in the Chile of Allende and again in Naples more than ten years ago. In this case the interest of the proletariat expresses itself directly for what it is, always with the same outcome, a direct attack on private property, since for proletarians the cause of all deprivation is indeed the fact that they are deprived of the means of life and of their production.

But, in the majority of cases, the





interest of the proletariat is filtered by the dominant ideology and camouflaged by its agents, especially trade-unionists and journalists, by means of a whole set of mediations which appear necessary (in the sense that this is the way it has to be) to the proletariat, and which disfigure it to the point of transforming it into its opposite: the praise of labour, of the company, of the factory,... It is important to explain this process of ideological transformation by which the attack on private property is recuperated and turned into its opposite, that is, into the defence of our own exploiters' private property. Even if we must always differentiate the real struggle of the proletariat, based upon its interests, from the banners or slogans which emerge, these do transform themselves objectively into weaknesses of this struggle. Indeed, struggle of the proletariat in which bourgeois banners are expressed is easily recuperated and destroyed. In all workers' struggles bourgeois banners imply an (almost always) fatal weakness.

It immediately appears natural to the proletariat that it cannot take the means of life which it needs from those who have it in their possession, although it would naturally be more human to do so. It does not even occur to the proletariat to take what is necessary to satisfy its needs as a human being (or if it does he is immediately put off by the whole apparatus of state terror). In the brutal disassociation between the indispensable means for his survival and his being, in this beastly and bloody separation, the proletariat does not see an aggression but instead something «natural». This naturalisation of the social relationship of privatisation is the product of centuries of exploitation and the transmission from generation to generation of the ideology of private property.

The absence of consciousness concerning practical alienation practically

develops alienated consciousness. With the same social naturalness which assimilates this separation, money is accepted as an indispensable mediation. In the same way that it appears natural to the human species not to be able to use the means of living which it needs, which it produces, yet which are within its reach, it considers it natural that in order to enjoy these means of living one must dispose of money to buy them. In this way, a historical social relationship just as specific as money becomes both natural and necessary. As money appears indispensable for obtaining the means of life it therefore appears as the symbol of all of objects of life and even of life itself.

However the question does not end there, because whilst money represents a necessary mediation for the proletarian, he himself does not have any. And any proletarian knows, even if his alienation does not allow him to grasp any more than this, that to obtain it - apart from through a general attack (revolution) or a partial attack (recuperation) on private property - he has nothing else to resort to than work. This not only means being disposed to sell his labour force commodity (hundreds of millions of proletarians find no buyer) but also meeting a buyer, someone who is effectively disposed to hand over money for the sale of the only thing which he possesses: his labour force.

Not only does he consider it natural not to appropriate what he needs, his own and exclusive creation(1), not only does he consider money to be natural and necessary, but now even his labour, in fact torture, which separates him from his really human activity(2) appears as something indispensable, inherent to the realisation of his life. The alienation of his life, the sale of himself and his humanity from then on becomes, from the point of view of alienated consciousness, an act of

The naturalisation of the social relationship of privatisation is the product of centuries of exploitation and the transmission from generation to generation of the ideology of private property.

1. We are not referring to the individual worker who, in the strict sense of the term, is not even productive but to the whole of the proletariat, to the collective worker who is the single producer of the means of life (let us also recall that he is also the single producer of all of the rubbish which capital needs «to produce» to valorise itself, that is use values that have nothing to do with human needs).

2. On this subject, «From man's alienation to human community» in Communism n°6 and «Human activity against labour» in Communism n°5.

Mediations are added which end up turning the wage slave into the most subservient defender not only of slavery in general (long live work!) and consequently of the historical interests of the bourgeoisie (the perpetuation of the system of wage slavery), but also the immediate interests of his immediate enemy...

liberty, the liberty to sell one's own labour force. Trade-unionists, politicians, do nothing other than fashion this alienated consciousness into pretty slogans : «Protect labour», «Struggle for free labour»(3), «Our laws guarantee the freedom of each individual»

It is obvious that the proletariat is at least conscious that he does not work because it is his desire, but rather because he has no other solution(4), that labour is not the realisation of his life but an indispensable means for living and what he associates with his real life is always outside of work. Yet this does not keep him from considering work to be a necessary mediation for possessing the objects which he needs to live.

In many cases alienated consciousness goes even further. To live one must consume, to consume one must be able to buy, to buy one must dispose of money, to dispose of money one must work, to work one must find a boss ready to buy one's labour force. But the possibility of there being bosses disposed to buy one's labour power depends on the profitability of the company, on the national economy functioning well. It's in this way that even more mediations are added which end up turning the wage slave into the most subservient defender not only of slavery in general (long live work!) and consequently of the historical interests of the bourgeoisie (the perpetuation of the system of wage slavery), but also the immediate interests of his immediate enemy, his boss, his exploiter, the national fraction of Capital which exploits him : «Defend the company», «Take care of the machines», «Not too many demands or else the company could shut down», «Let's sacrifice ourselves for the national economy», «Let's produce our own goods, against foreign imports!». In reality, the boss, the trade-unionist, the politician, do not even have to defend the need for all of these mediations to obtain a «good

job», a job to get money, money to procure the means of living, since centuries and centuries of production of alienated consciousness make each of these mediations (in reality artificial, or unnecessary from a historical point of view) as natural as the meeting of the sperm and the egg permitting the reproduction of the human species and thus the existence of men and women.

When the company or mine closes, or threatens to do so, because it is no longer profitable, the society of workers bearing this alienated consciousness reaches supreme levels. «Protection of labour», «of the workplace», «of the company»... is made concrete by proposing sacrifices. Recent experience has shown us that in periods like the present, even when a real proletarian struggle rises up in reaction to a factory closure, this struggle does not come to terms with itself for what it really is - a struggle against the increase in workers' poverty. There is, amongst the workers in struggle, an almost general persistence of this set of slogans typical of the alienated proletariat, that is to say, belonging to a dominated class reproducing the ideology of its own domination and exploitation.

Once we have exposed the process of ideological naturalisation by which alienated consciousness assumes deprivation and alienation to be necessary and natural, and once we have made explicit all mediations which, as precise historical products, ideally consolidate themselves as eternal and indispensable mediations between man and the satisfaction of his needs, we must ask ourselves what is the duty of revolutionary militants in such situations, faced with such slogans?

Communists participate in all proletarian movements even if they oppose their banners or formal leaders which, in general, are not the expression of the real movement but only of its banners. They must oppose them openly by criti-

3. Marx already said «It is not about freeing work but suppressing it»

4. It is only in the case of extreme tyranny and the total destruction of workers' resistance that the human being can be oppressed to the point of considering work as an end and not as a means for living. This is what Stalinism, Nazism, the Popular Fronts, and closer to us, Castrism, and, to a lesser extent, Sandinism attempted. But the limits of such experiences can be demonstrated by the ever-increasing number of proletarians accused of sabotaging work who are sentenced, imprisoned or murdered.

5. As the reader will have noticed, in this

cising, mercilessly, all of the ideological expressions of the bourgeoisie at the heart of the proletarian movement, because the future of the movement is at stake. If the movement continues to struggle against the boss in front of it, against the state, against capital in general... despite expressing itself through slogans like «Protect the workplace», it remains alive and the essential issue is that of direction, perspective. But these slogans almost always end up killing the movement. When alienated consciousness begins to dictate all the actions and the movement really transforms itself into the protection of the company, the mine, the national economy by accepting sacrifices,... the rupture from the revolutionaries is total and the most they can aspire to is gaining a small group of militants and starting to draw a balance sheet of the life and death of the movement.

Yet it is important to ask whether revolutionaries criticise all of the inaccurate slogans in the movement itself in the same way or, to put it another way, whether the various banners that we have mentioned in this text are all equally harmful for the proletariat? The answer is no, there are different levels of alienation of consciousness which correspond to the different mediations which we have analysed.

The immediate interests and the historical programmes of the two social classes confront each other through polarity. The slogans which are totally accurate from the revolutionary point of view are those which openly and directly expose in a straightforward way proletarian (and consequently human) needs, that is when no mediation is accepted as natural but always as historical and directly maintained by the state. In these cases, private property and the state are attacked directly and the social polarisation between revolution and counter-revolution is inevitable. At the opposite extreme,

all of these mediations are considered to be natural, slaves defending their slavery, the means of their slavery and even their slave masters. Worse still, the protection of the company, the economy and self-sacrifice increase the competition which workers make between themselves, they increase the global rate of exploitation and destroy the proletariat as a class, transforming it into a multitude of atoms of capital killing one another (capitalism is the war of all against all!).

But it is the intermediate cases which are the most difficult, which pose the most problems for militants. When, in their struggle against capital, instead of struggling directly against exploitation, seeking to appropriate a larger part of the social product, proletarians ask for more money (wage rises, increased unemployment and social benefits,...) the slogans correspond to the proletarian content of the movement, the interests of capital are attacked in every way and the interests of the proletariat are demanded. In this sense, the development of the struggle and of these slogans contains the revolutionary struggle(5). But the acceptance of these first mediations as natural is, without doubt, a definite weakness which we must criticise and correct. In practice the whole of their consequences can be harmful.

Firstly, with the acceptance of the mediation of money follows an ever-present tendency to accept all of the other mediations which we live. Secondly, the demand itself makes it seem like the one who is prepared to



«And slavery doesn't exist anymore» by Frans Masereel

sort of analysis it is decisive to fight the old conception of a separation between the economic and the political, between the immediate and the historical, by showing their indivisible unity, and by showing within each of these aspects, upon which social-democracy has built its theory, the allegedly opposed or less distinct aspects are contained.

6. Neither those who are satisfied with

When the worker shouts «Protect work», «Protect the company»... what really interests him is neither work, which often he spits on all day long, nor the dark tomb which is for him the mine or the company, but what he needs to live better.

these slogans nor the ones who abandon the struggle because these slogans are not revolutionary enough or those who declare from the heights of their theoretical platforms that all struggle for the immediate interests of the proletariat is historically outdated deserve this name.

7. Whilst reformists enclose the struggle in the framework of the increase of the nominal or the real wage, the idealist isolates himself from the movement by declaring that he cannot fight for a wage increase because he is against wage labour.

make a concession - the boss or the State - is no longer something to be destroyed but someone with whom to negotiate. Thirdly, as a result of the above factors, the state even appears to be a necessary mediation to obtain our needs, particularly in the case of unemployment benefits and social security (let's take into account that, in the past, such crumbs for the maintenance of the labour force were not handed down by the state but depended upon the internal solidarity of the proletariat). Fourthly, expression of the social product as money, as opposed to as a share, contains a set of ideological distortions specific to it, tending to convince the proletariat that he has bettered his situation when, in reality, it has become worse. This last point, in a list which is not exhaustive, is by no means the least important: the wages in terms of money can increase whilst the wages in terms of objects decrease (due to inflation, the problem between nominal wages and real wages). In the same way, the wages in objects can increase while the rate of exploitation increases, implying a decrease in participation in the social product by the proletariat (due to the increase in the productivity of labour appropriated by capital, the problem between real wages -and nominal- and relative wages). In the face of all of this, revolutionary militants(6), active in these movements, never forget the critique and the assertion of the interests of the whole of the class (the struggle against private property, for the abolition of wage labour), at the same time as criticising any possible fixation on these insufficiently clear slogans. The revolutionary militant, specifically where wages and the struggle for wage rises are concerned(7), denounces both vulgar traps (rises in nominal wages) and subtle ones (rises in real wages) used by the bourgeoisie to pass off increases in the rate of the

worker's exploitation and social misery as increases in his well-being. The revolutionary militant bases his action and slogans on the demand for a real attack against the rate of exploitation, the only real struggle of the proletariat which, at the same time, brings the struggle for wage rises to its final conclusion, making its character inseparable from the struggle for the abolition of wage labour.

If we go from the proletarian pole of openly proletarian slogans to openly counter-revolutionary bourgeois slogans, if thus we advance, whilst incorporating these mediations which appear natural in alienated consciousness, there is necessarily a point, a moment, where a qualitative step takes place. We are not claiming that these slogans in themselves, rising up out of this consciousness are either a proletarian guarantee or a counter-revolutionary guarantee. We have already given examples of proletarian movements with totally bourgeois slogans. Consequently, the difficulty lies in locating the qualitative step by which a proletarian struggle is liquidated and wherein the workers in the movement transform themselves objectively into agents of capital, not only in the productive sense (which is always the case) but also in the sense of defending wage slavery and the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie (defending private property, its means of production, and its rate of exploitation). It is particularly difficult to situate this qualitative leap at each specific moment of the class struggle without making it depend in a linear way on the slogans, while at the same time considering the slogans as part of the real movement.

Thus, for example, when the «the protection of work», «the protection of the company», «the protection of the mine» are demanded, the movement (if there still is one) kills itself. This must be clearly denounced and

is one of the most important tasks of revolutionaries who participate in the struggle. But we insist on the fact that we have seen bourgeois slogans appear a thousand times at the heart of objectively proletarian movements against the bourgeoisie.

When the worker shouts «Protect work», «Protect the company»... what really interests him is neither work, which often he spits on all day long, nor the dark tomb which is for him the mine or the company, but what he needs to live better. However, he is not bold enough to proclaim his own interests, society has taught him that this is not the done thing. The radical trade-unionist, the leftist, the Trotskyist, will say that even if these slogans are not the best it is better to stick to them «because if not we'll isolate ourselves from the masses»(!??), or because public opinion is more accepting of the fact that «they are not making demands for their selfish interests but for the interests of the whole nation». The duty of revolutionaries is precisely the opposite, to see to it that the movement assumes its own interests. This has nothing to do with the supposed transformation of an economic struggle into a political struggle, nor with the introduction of political consciousness into economic struggle, as social-democracy advocates in all its various forms. Instead it means, through the struggle itself, making conscious the real interests contained within this movement for proletarian needs.

When there really is a proletarian movement against capital (one cannot transform a workers' non-struggle into a workers' struggle by the introduction of ideas!!) the key problem is to assume itself as such, to break from the whole ideological spider's web. Thus reemerges the problem of knowing what slogans to use in opposition to those of the bourgeoisie. The answer has appeared throughout the whole of

this text. All bourgeois slogans start from a natural and logical presentation of everything that is social and, in human terms, absurd. Contrary to this, the slogans which make the struggle advance are those which, even if they appear socially as illogical or absurd, start from the needs of the proletariat as human beings, and therefore from all that signifies the real improvement of its standard of living, to the detriment of the bourgeoisie and the national economy.

Consequently the answer is not complicated. On the contrary, it is the counter-revolution which complicates everything: it manages to present even our own needs and everything that makes us suffer deep in our guts as illogical and absurd and at the same time, it portrays our sacrifice at the altar of the national economy as being most natural and human.

The answer is to be found, to express it brutally, in the guts of all proletarians who struggle. The right slogans and banners will vary according to the circumstances, but they can never consist of accepting these mediations as natural, of accepting the sacrifice of needs. On the contrary, they are the real expression of these needs.

To stick to human needs, against all attempts by bourgeois intellectuals to introduce consciousness into proletarian ranks, is not only the line of action which leads to revolution but

When there really is a proletarian movement against capital, the key problem is to assume itself as such, to break from the whole ideological spider's web.



In our central reviews in French and Spanish we recently published an article entitled «Against the summits and anti-summits; bourgeois attempts to channel of the proletarian struggles on a world scale and the invariant struggle for the proletarian rupture» (1) in which we denounced the large meetings of the international capitalist organisations as well as the official protestations of the bourgeois left, its parties and its trade-unions (demos, meetings, alternative forum,...). This article has not been translated into English yet. Nevertheless, we wanted to publish the following leaflet that we received on our internet site some months ago.

The meeting of the G8 held in Genoa last summer (2001) have been the scene of a violent repression. But this repression had already been launched before. Many groups and militants were arrested and questioned during their preparatory meetings. It was the case of the group «Precari Nati» («Born Precarious») who wanted to circulate in Genoa a leaflet against the summits and counter-summits which they considered as huge masquerades. But Precari Nati did not circulate their leaflet because the police raided their premises, arrested 13 comrades and kept them for seven hours. Two of these comrades were accused of possessing arms (Swiss knives) and more than thousand leaflets were confiscated. The militants arrested belonged to the following groups: Precari Nati (Italy), Kolinko (Germany), Workers against Work (England)

We reproduce below the content of the confiscated leaflet and want to stress the clearness with which these comrades dissociate themselves from the antiglobalisation ideology, and the strength of their denunciation of the social-democrat current who only aim at the «modernisation of capitalism and who hope that their proposals (e.g. tobin tax) will be able to save capitalist social relations, i.e. the same relations which «perpetuate our alienation and exploitation»

1. See Communisme n°52 and Comunismo n°47

## BURNING AND LOOTING ALL ILLUSIONS TONIGHT...

If we are here, it is not as professional activists of anti-globalisation, trying to find a position of mediation between the puppets of the economy and its 'victims', by acting on behalf of others (the «invisible», the revolted proletarians against the IMF or the World Bank, the refugees, the precarious workers.) We are not interested in representing anyone, and we spit in the face of those who wish to represent us. We do not understand exclusion as exclusion from the centers of economic decision-making but as the loss of our everyday life and activity as proletarians because of the economy.

If we are here, it is not because we prefer fair trade to free trade, it is not because we believe that globalisation weakens the authority of nation-states. We are not here because we think that the state is controlled by non-democratic institutions, nor because we want more control over the market. We are here because all trade is the trade of human misery, because all states are prisons, because democracy conceals the dictatorship of capital.

If we are here it is not because we see proletarians as victims, nor because we want to place ourselves as their protectors. We didn't come here to be impressed by spectacular riots but to learn the tactics of everyday class war by the strikers of Ansaldo and the disobedient proletarians in the metal industry. We come here to exchange our own experiences as the dispossessed of the whole world.

If we are here, we do not come as members of the numerous NGO's, official lobbies, ATTAC or the rest of those who merely wish to be included in the discussions over the modernisation of capitalism and who hope that their proposals (e.g. tobin tax) will be able to save capitalist social relations, i.e. the same relations which perpetuate our alienation and exploitation.

If we are here, it is as proletarians who recognise capitalism not in the meetings of the various gangsters but in the daily robbery of our lives in the factories, in the call-centers, as unemployed, for the needs of the economy. We do not speak on behalf of anyone, we start from our own conditions. Capitalism does not exist because of the G8, the G8 exists because of capitalism. Capitalism is nothing but the expropriation of our activity, which turns against us as an alien force.

Our festival against capital does not have a beginning or an end, it is not a pre-determined spectacle, it does not have a fixed date. Our future lies beyond all mediations, beyond nation-states, beyond all attempts to reform capitalism. Our future lies in the destruction of the economy.

FOR THE TOTAL ABOLITION OF THE STATE AND CAPITAL.  
FOR THE WORLD HUMAN COMMUNITY.  
PROLETARIANS AGAINST THE MACHINE.

Precari Nati, Email: [ti14264@iperbole.bologna.it](mailto:ti14264@iperbole.bologna.it),  
Kolinko, Workers Against Work.

## **Antiterrorism**

=

### **development of terror against our struggles**

The war in Afghanistan and its trail of antiterrorist measures in every country, mark a step in the development of the general war against the proletariat!

- Massive bombings or «surgical strikes», massacres on a large scale or «collateral damage»,... while putting the planet to fire and sword, the bourgeois defend the peace of their world of misery through terror.
- Special courts, military decrees, «administrative internments», unlimited detentions, trials in camera,... they sharpen their weapons to condemn all proletarian suspected to break the public order, the national security, to break the social peace, the dictatorship of the economy.
- Increase in the number of the international exchanges of information, international arrest warrants,... Lists are circulating with the names of groups or individuals to destroy,... at this day, in the USA, 5000 people are aimed at.
- Antiterrorism is used as a pretext to violently accelerate the spiral: decreases of wages, layoffs, starvation, armament,... In the air, road transport,... the postal services, the chemistry, insurances,... layoffs are showered, by hundreds of thousand, in the USA, in Europe, in Asia,... On the other hand, in the sectors of repression (armament, electronic surveillance, cops,...) they invest and hire!

Facing the proletarian struggles that «threaten» to develop all States support themselves and unite. Antiterrorism is the monopoly of weapons in the hands of the State against our struggles!

Let's open our eyes and let's recognize that the war in Afghanistan, in Yugoslavia, in Iraq,... is a war against our own struggles!

Let's open our eyes and let's recognize that the struggles of our class brothers in Algeria, in Syria, in Lebanon, in Iran, in Indonesia,... are our own struggles!

To submit to the antiterrorist campaigns, it is accepting the brutal reduction of wages over there as here and it is contributing to the repression of our comrades over there as here.

Our struggle is here and now against what makes of us slaves of labour, of shortage, of money, of capital.

### **THE ENEMY IS IN OUR OWN COUNTRY THIS IS OUR OWN BOURGEOISIE!**

While the capital claims to be socialist or liberal, warmongering or pacifist, polluting or biodegradable, from the South or from the North,... it is always dictatorship of money, of the rate of profit, and, from summits to antiummits, from referendum to elections, it puts on stage the bourgeois who will determine what fate has in store for us.

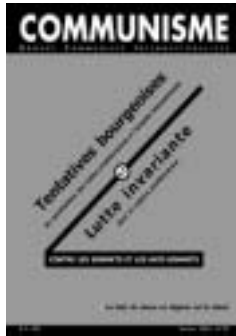
**Let's organize beyond the borders,  
outside and against the summits and antiummits  
and any other structure of the bourgeois State!**

**The only alternative is  
THE WORLDWIDE REVOLUTION!**

Internationalist Communist Group (ICG)  
BP 54 - Saint-Gilles (BRU) 3 - 1060 Brussels -Belgium-

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

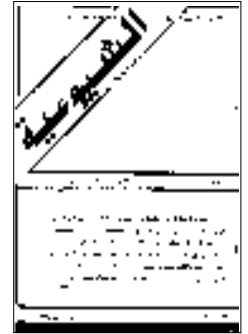
COMMUNISME n° 52  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN FRENCH



TENTATIVES BOURGEOISES DE CANALISATION  
DES LUTTES PROLÉTARIENNES À L'ÉCHELLE INTERNATIONALE  
ET LUTTE INVARIANTE POUR LA RUPTURE PROLÉTARIENNE  
CONTRE LES SOMMETS ET LES ANTI-SOMMETS

NOUS SOULIGNONS: GÈNES 2001:  
LE TERRORISME DÉMOCRATIQUE EN PLEINE ACTION  
«BRÛLER TOUTE ILLUSION CE SOIR...» TRACT DE PRECARI NATI  
PROLÉTAIRES DE TOUS PAYS,  
LA LUTTE DE CLASSE EN ALGÉRIE EST LA NÔTRE!  
NOUS SOULIGNONS: LA GUERRE BIO EST SUR LE MARCHÉ

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



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



COMUNISMO n° 48  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN SPANISH

CAPITALISMO IGUAL A TERRORISMO CONTRA LA HUMANIDAD  
Contra la guerra y la represión capitalista

LA LUCHA DE CLASES EN ARGELIA ES LA NUESTRA  
SUBRAYAMOS:  
GÉNOVA: EL TERRORISMO DEMOCRÁTICO EN PLENA ACCIÓN  
A GOLPES: DESDE UNA CALLE DE ALGÚN LUGAR DE MADRID

KOMMUNIZMUS n° 2  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN GERMAN



- FASCHISTISCH ODER ANTIFASCHISTISCH... DIE DIKTATUR DES KAPITALS IST DIE DEMOKRATIE
- ARBEITSDENKSCHRIFT: «JÜDISCHE ARBEITER, KAMERA- DEN» (1943)
- ES WAR EINMAL EIN STRAFANSTALTPROJEKT
- DIREKTE AKTION UND INTERNATIONALISMUS
- NACH EINER SYNTHESE UNSERER GRUNDSATZE



COMMUNISM n° 12  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN ENGLISH

THE INVARIANCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY POSITION ON WAR:  
THE MEANING OF REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM.

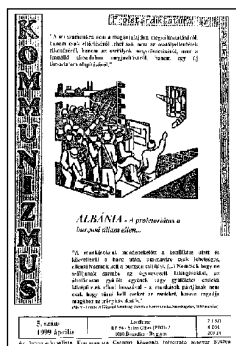
WE UNDERLINE:  
1929-1939: 25 CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN ENGLAND

BANGLADESH... NOT JUST FLOODS!  
MURDEROUS FLOODS AND FAMINES...  
THANKS TO NATION AND PROGRESS!  
A REPUGNANT SPECTACLE «OUR CONTEMPT FOR THE BLUE RIBBON»

COMMUNISM n° 2  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN KURDISH



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



KOMMUNIZMUS n° 5  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN HUNGARIAN

- ALBÁNIA : A PROLETARIÁTUS A BURZOÁ ÁLLAM ELLEN
- A BURZOÁZIA GYONGYSZEMEI
- AD' NÉLKÜLI ORZAG
- A KAPITALISTA ÁLLAM FEJLŐDÉSÉNEK NÉHÁNY
- IDOSZERŰ PÉLDAJA

COMUNISMO n° 4  
CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ICG IN PORTUGUESE



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