

----- "ROJAVA REVOLUTION"? ----- "ANTI-STATE"? "ANTI-CAPITALIST"?



----- OR A NEW MYSTIFICATION? -----

A View of Rojava or Criticism as an Opportunity for Growth and Development

Theses on the Revolution and Counterrevolution in the Spanish Region during the 1930s

“ROJAVA REVOLUTION”? “ANTI-STATE”? “ANTI-CAPITALIST”?

OR A NEW MYSTIFICATION?

THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES about Rojava is the following one: Is what some call the “Rojava Revolution” really a social revolution or better said is it a part of the dynamics of destruction of the present social order (that is to say capitalist order)? Or, on the contrary, wouldn’t it be rather about a process of instrumentalization and containment by social-democrat institutions (and therefore bourgeois ones), under the pretext of “social liberation”, of an authentic movement of revolt against misery and State repression, in order to better justify their “struggles of national liberation”?

The revolutionary movement naturally sought the answer to this question in discussions and confrontations of often conflicting, vague and complex views, testimonies and analyses. As “Class War” we took part in this debate too, and we published a selection of contributions on our blog.

And we can say that this debate has led to a single conclusion: that the famous “Rojava revolution” is by no means part of the revolutionary “anti-capitalist” and “anti-state” dynamics. After all, it is nothing more than a local variant of the “Bolivarian Revolution” or “21st century socialism” controlled and limited by a powerful propaganda machine combining “*libertarian municipalism*”, Marxism-Leninism and “national liberation”.

Those who deny this conclusion today are not slow to understand or poorly informed. They are simply followers of reform of Capital, its repainting on “red”, adherents of the strategy of changing everything so that the essential remains the same. And today if we hear mostly the voices of Rojava’s supporters at the international level (though less than before), it is because for the revolutionaries this issue has already been resolved and their critical attitude towards Rojava remains unchanged (which does not rule out that the proletarian movement in the region in the future takes a second breath and opposes the social-democratic recuperation of his struggle, which we, as communists, support, of course).

IMPORTANT SECTORS OF “ANARCHISM” (the official and even the less official ones) declare themselves to be the staunch partisans of the “Rojava Revolution”, that would be a “*genuine revolution*” according to the “eminent” intellectual David Graeber. This “revolution” is prompted and controlled by a set of institutions as for example “popular assemblies”, “cantons”, “communes”, “municipalities” that globally and fundamentally don’t prevent (and historically in themselves never prevented) the reproduction of the same social relations than those dominating on a planet scale.

Were we naïve or stupid to believe “the anarchists” when they declare they merrily hate work, justice and the army?

Indeed, exploitation at work is effectively achieved in Rojava by means of “*social economy*” and its “cooperatives” where the proletarian is always so deeply tied to “his” (“her”) work tool, to “his” (“her”) machine, to “his” (“her”) workplace, to profitability requirements of “his” (“her”) local, cantonal and “libertarian” economy, in short to “his” (“her”) exploitation that through the magic of words would succeed in becoming

more “humane”. It’s always in the name of “realism” and the refusal of critics, which are caricatured as being “ultra-leftist”, that work rules supreme over the region; salaried work obviously, even though the supplying in paper money, in monetary excrements or in coins of the realm is not always fully assured because of war.

“The anarchists” always declared their hatred for the State and the Nation... And yet the Rojava has all of the features of the State... Although some people call Rojava a “*proto-State*”, that is to say, one that “*has a certain number of characteristics of modern States without having all of them*”, for our part, our critical conception of the State determines us to see in these entities nothing else than a materialization of the State of the capitalists. Beyond the concept of Nation-State, the State is a social relation, composed of various apparatuses: government, parliament, police, army, employers, unions, political parties, school, and family... combined with various ideologies that give it strength: parliamentarianism, religion, positivism, authoritarianism... At the present level of development of class societies of which capitalism is the ultimate outcome as a synthesis of previous modes of production, the State can only be



the State of the capitalists, capitalism organized as a State, as a social force imposing the dictatorship of value over humanity. It is thus for us an absurdity to speak about "*proto-State*"... As for the nation, is it really necessary to recall the nationalistic foundation of the "*Kurdish liberation movement*"?

"The anarchists" always expressed their contempt towards the government, parliamentarianism and elections... But the Rojava is led by an infinite number of parliaments, whether they are called "popular assemblies", "councils", "communes" or "municipalities" is not important if their practical content always consists in managing (with a "human face" or rather with a grimace of humanity) the social relation dominating world widely (i.e. capitalism, even though it is repainted in red or in red and black). All these structures get organized at a local level of a street, a district, a village, a town or a city, a region and partake all of them of the electoral principle. Finally, at the decision-making superior level, the "cantons" have their own governments as well as their ministries and related ministers. In opposition to what we claim as territorial organizations: "*Unionen*" in Germany in 1919/20, "*Shuras*" in Iraq in 1991, etc., what matters is the content of subversion of this world in order to "*not make things profitable for the capitalists*" (as the KAPD said)...

"The anarchists" pretend to be allergic to all concept of "party" that they reduce to the bourgeois political parties, whether they stand in the elections or not, or even to Bolshevik and Leninist parties. But suddenly, there are political parties that fill these same "anarchists" with joy: it's about the PKK ("*Kurdistan Workers Party*") in Turkey and the PYD ("*Democratic Union Party*") in Syria. These parties, and even more the PYD than the PKK, develop a diplomatic politics that couldn't be more classically bourgeois, going so far as to open "offices" (embassies in a way) in Moscow and Prague. The PYD even went, during a big European tour, so far as "to be on the game" at the Elysée Palace in February 2015, where some of its most famous representatives have been received by "Mr. President" (at the time) François Hollande himself.

For important sectors of "anarchism", for libertarians, the events in Rojava would be essentially libertarian-inspired, anti-State and anti-capitalist in nature. Or at least, the "Rojava Revolution" would no longer meet the traditional criteria of "national liberation struggles" but its ideological structuring would directly ensue from the writings of the American libertarian academic Murray Bookchin and his principles of "*communalism*", "*municipalism*". There are even some who venture to compare Rojava with Spain of the 1930s.

For the other political family (competing but yet complementary to the other one), for this ideological family which claims more or less "Marxism", there is nothing surprising about the fact that it puts forward precisely "*the right of peoples to self-determination*", dear to Lenin, Bolsheviks, Third International, and their Marxist-Leninist, Stalinist, Trotskyite heirs. We even read in an article published in the French newspaper "L'Humanité" saying that the "Rojava Revolution" would express a new form of "*socialism with a human face*"...

THE CONCEPT OF "DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERALISM", which was theoretically developed a few years ago by PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, a concept popular and fashionable especially in libertarian circles (but not only there), claims to criticize the Nation-State and the creation of a new Kurdish Nation-State is therefore no longer its political goal (according to the PKK's "new paradigm"). In addition to "direct democracy", the immediate declared goal of "democratic confederalism" is "libertarian municipalism", in which "people's assemblies" play a



REVOLUTION IN ROJAVA

Democratic Autonomy and Women's
Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan

MICHAEL KNAPP, ANJA FLACH and ERCAN AYBOGA
Translated by JANET BIEHL Foreword by DAVID GRAEBER

key role; as well as the regional autonomy of each "Kurdish entity" through cantonal and municipal organizations within each Nation-State. As can be seen here, the revised ideology of national liberation (in its version of "democratic confederalism") claims that, of course, after a facelift and some minor reforms, it wants to keep the current existing Nation-States. In the conception of the PKK, "decentralization" and "autonomy" stand against the "centralism" of the Nation-State, against its chauvinism, and they are presented as tools for weakening the State. A representative of the KCK (one of the countless organizations close to the PKK) in Diyarbakir, Kurdistan, Turkey, spoke in an interview about "*shrinking the State*"...

The PKK therefore sails in the same waters as the Zapatistas, so appreciated by the Kurdish National Liberation Movement. According to us, communists, anarchists, internationalists, it is on the contrary clear (unlike all these reformers of Capital) that the State cannot be "*shrunk*", we cannot build something "*beyond the State*", but it must be abolished from the ground up and all its material foundations which give it life must be subverted, eradicated...

Some libertarians also openly and unhesitatingly support the "Rojava Revolution" because it brings, in their own words, "*anti-Statist forms of national liberation*". Let us therefore recall for the umpteenth time that all nationalism, whether it is a "small" or a "large" nation, is historically chauvinist, expansionist, imperialist... and therefore Statist! It is enough to see today how the three cantons initially forming Rojava in 2014 exponentially developed (Rojava is nowadays made up of

seven cantons) to form an area under politico-military control of the PYD and its YPG/SDF militias representing a quarter of the territory of the Syrian Nation-State, extending even beyond the former capital of the self-proclaimed Caliphate of the Islamic State (the city of Raqqa, taken over in October 2017 after months of intensive fighting and shelling that left behind only ruins and thousands of corpses), extending to the outskirts of the desert of the province of Deir-ez-Zor, very far from Rojava. This new administrative entity, supported more or less by its arms suppliers, the USA, momentarily abandoned the name of Rojava (which sounds “too” Kurdish) for the very bureaucratic name of “*Democratic Federation of North Syria*” (since 2018 “*Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria*”), which conceals much less “romantic” aspects but which is much more “serious” on the international diplomatic scene.

The “new” ideological paradigm called “democratic confederalism” is finally nothing but just a vulgar imposture wearing somehow the clothes of “revolution”, smelling the vague taste of “revolution” but having absolutely nothing in common with a minimum of beginning of dynamics pushing towards the overthrowing of ruling capitalist social relations.

Let’s have a look for a while also on one of the pillars of this “new” progressivism widely distilled to justify the revolutionary nature of the social movement in Rojava: the “multi-ethnicity” and “multiculturalism” so much praised by all the propaganda channels of the ideological apparatuses holding sway in Rojava as well as acting elsewhere in its favor.

What matters to us, we as revolutionary proletarians, communist militants, or anarchist ones (beyond labels), it’s not what “differentiates” us, it’s not our “singularity”, the fact that we are “Czech” or “French” or “British” or “American” while others are “Kurdish” or “Assyrian” or “Chaldean” or “Sunni” or “Shia”, etc. What is important on the contrary is what unifies us as a human and militant community against the global and universal dictatorship of Capital which materializes for all of us through exploitation, alienation, commoditization of our bodies and our lives, misery, war, death... What matters for us is to display very clearly our contempt for all national community, community of citizens, people’s community, for all democratic community in the deep sense of what democracy is, i.e. not a simple form (parliamentary democracy, “workers” democracy or direct democracy, cantonal or municipal democracy, etc.) but rather the essence of capitalism and therefore the negation of class antagonism and the dilution of the proletariat (revolutionary class) into this bourgeois entity that is the People, the Nation and ultimately the State. What matters above all is the fact that we are, or become, brothers and sisters of misery and exploitation, brothers and sisters of revolution; and that we recognize it consciously.

Humanity has been separated from itself, from the nature, from its activity and its production, to be turned into slaves, serfs and modern proletarians. Mankind is separated from their genuine human community and they are linked as a multi-“something” false community: multiethnic, multicultural, multinational... Internationalism is not the addition of various or even different nationalisms or all nationalisms, but on the contrary its complete and accomplished negation...

PROXY MILITARIES? We would like to add one more important element to the critique of “Rojava Revolution” developed in different contributions on our blog – the help of the interna-

tional capital that Rojava has received. The help of NATO, EU, different national States and other capitalist institutions, help that only further confirms the bourgeois character of those organisations that pretend to represent the social movement of subversion of this world in Rojava.

In this sense, in the sense of classic bourgeois politics, there is nothing to be amazed or offended at seeing the PKK/PYD meeting its partners (in Washington as in Paris or Moscow...) in order to strengthen their relationship and to discuss their military cooperation as well as the business of reconstruction in Rojava and Kobanê... For France, it was also necessary, especially in the light of attacks against “Charlie Hebdo” in January 2015, to promote in the media an image of official rapprochement and alliance with the forces fighting on the ground Jihadism, “radicalism”, “*Islam fascism*”...

Let’s point out in passing these “particular friendship” that emphasize the obvious complicity of these “revolutionary” organizations from Rojava with our class enemies at the very time when the capitalist State (in France, Belgium, Germany, Spain,...) initiated, developed, strengthened so-called “antiterrorist” new measures and campaigns, which advocated “*national unity*”, “*sacred union*”, “*the defence of republican values*”,



“*living together*” and ultimately the reunification of the people around the “*Democracy in danger*”, i.e. the capitalist dictatorship so much hated by the exploited. These terrorist campaigns of the State aimed first and officially to fight against Islamism but in fact were in a second time (and this is their original and essential goal) much more powerful new tools in the fight against subversion, against the re-emergence of class warfare, against the global social revolution to come. For us definitively and contrary to leftist circles, there is no “lesser evil” that is worth to be supported...

Really, what an interesting “revolution”, “anticapitalistic” and “anti-statist”, which has all the characteristics of a State with a government led by the “single party” PYD, ministries, a multitude of mini parliaments, courts of justice, a “Constitution” (called “*Social Contract*”), an army (the YPG/YPJ militias increasingly militarized), a police force (the Asayish) which imposes internal social order (also with its “antiterrorist special units” whose Rambo have no cause to be jealous of their murderous colleagues of equivalent corps as the “SWAT” in the United States of America, the “Spetsnaz” in Russia, the “GIGN” in France, etc.).

"Revolution" all the more interesting because it "cashes in on all sides": the YPG/YPJ is nothing but proxy militaries of the capitalist powers, their auxiliaries on the ground, facing a "common enemy" (Islamic State). We've lost count of the offensives carried out jointly by the YPG/YPJ and other SDF:

- with the US Air Force,
- with the "Green Berets" (these fucking torturers of US special forces),
- with the Russian air force,
- with Bashar Syrian Army (with whom the PYD is co-managing the city of Qamishli, among others) and its air force which is bombing the rebel areas (and not necessarily Al-Nusra and other jihadists!!!),
- with the Lebanese Hezbollah,
- the Iranian "*Guardians of the Revolution*" (slaughterers of our class brothers and sisters),
- and so on, *ad nauseam*!

So we can congratulate the Rojava which allowed the murderers of the US Air Force to make up for the difficulties of using their Turkish ally Incirlik airbase. Rojava is not yet a member of the Atlantic Alliance (NATO), but just a little more



effort "comrades"... All the bullshit on "*democracy without a State*", anti-capitalism, and revolution is nothing but just for show intended for leftist (libertarian and Marxist-Leninist) milieus who are always ready to satisfy themselves with a "lesser evil" and a reform of capitalism.

There's no need to wonder or to take offense at the fact that the PKK/PYD, the YPG/YPJ overtly announced their collaboration (either simultaneously or in turn) with the USA, Russia or Syria. Yesterday they already collaborated with the Hezbollah, the Syrian regime of Assad father: Ocalan and all the PKK leadership had their headquarters in Damascus before alliances were reversed around 1998!!! The same way the PKK signed peace agreements with Turkey in 2013, agreements that held until 2015, not because they would finally have been denounced by the PKK (supposed to be anti-statist) but because these didn't correspond anymore to the Turkish imperialist necessities...

Whereas the Assad regime forces again and again heavily bombed the rebel-held region of al-Gutta, East of Damascus, this same regime sent some paramilitary troops (Shia militias close to Iran) in order to defend Afrin canton, which had just been invaded in February 2018 by the Turkish army and its

Islamist auxiliaries. The intervention of Syrian forces will be carried out at the request of PKK/PYD, YPG/SDF militias, with a concrete politico-military deal between both sides – "Rojava Revolution" and Baath regime.

And in the ranks of the Rojavists there isn't absolutely any problem with this and it is quite normal for them that these butchers are coming to help to save "democratic confederalism" from the Turkish aggression. Rojava Administration also called Damascus forces to protect national borders and integrity of Syria. What the hell does it mean to pretend refusing the concept of Nation-State (according to the "new paradigm" of PKK) when in the same time (maybe for "*tactical and temporary*" reasons, as justified by Rojavists) they make alliances with the Syrian Nation-State, they call for the defense of the latter, "*a sovereign state*"?

How can the partisans of "Revolution in Rojava" close their eyes to these facts?

Turkey, Syria, the USA, the EU, Gulf monarchies, Russia, Iran, and even "*proto*"-States like Rojava and Islamic State... all these States, all States are great buddies with varying degrees of good fortune according to geostrategic circumstances and the defense of their particular national and nationalistic interests; they get along with each other at rank and file's expense, i.e. us all, the exploited, the proletarians.

And the same partisans of "Rojava Revolution" justify this collaboration arguing that: "*In the 1930s Spanish anarchists accepted weapons from the Soviet Union even though they were fully aware that conditions attached to these weapons were intended to undermine the revolution.*" If counterrevolutionary powers (yesterday the USSR, today the USA, Russia, EU, etc.) provide any armament, any logistical supplies, it's of course while having their own interests to defend, with their own agenda as powers. And at the time many of our fellow comrades in Spain thought and today fighters in Rojava think that it's not them who will be used by these capitalist, imperialist powers but they will use them in a kind of "*tactical and temporary*" alliances. Reality showed and still shows the evidence that it's completely false. After having fought against fascism, for the defense of the bourgeois republic and refused to put forward the real needs of social revolution (e.g. through the self-proclaimed "*dictatorship of anarchy*"), the proletariat in Spain had been obliged to accept the dissolution of the workers' militias and therefore the militarization of these latter, abandoning thus their "revolutionary spirit" on the altar of a "lesser evil" to fight for, of a "revolution" to be done "after" the victory over fascism that never happened...

If indeed the revolution will need weapons, guns, canons, missiles and surely much more, what social revolution needs more than anything else it's a clear perspective about what is to be done and with whom. The same goes when workers take "their" factories in their hands and manage them; and remember Leon Blum's cynical but nevertheless somehow acute comments about factories occupation in France in 1936: "*workers occupy factories but in fact it's factories that occupy them*", giving them something to do (in others words: divert them from their tasks to destroy the capitalist social relations)... The problem is not as such to occupy factories and to take in hands the means of production, but from then on what is to be done with them, what is to be produced, and for which purposes...

**“ROJAVA REVOLUTION”? “ANTI-STATE”? “ANTI-CAPITALIST”?
OR A NEW MYSTIFICATION?**

The “military question”, the use of guns, is not separated from the totality of the revolutionary militant tasks to assume, to take on, it’s not a question apart. It’s not the military question that leads the social movement but the contrary. This issue is very acute regarding what happens in Rojava: we were literally overwhelmed with such a flood of war communiqués about the military situation in Afrin (and before it was in Manbij, Raqqa, Deir-Ezzor, etc. all regions swallowed by Rojava “Self-Administration”). There is no way out nor any explanation to be given on how a “revolutionary” struggle could so easily collaborate directly with US Air Force, US Special Forces (Green Berets), with the fact that the US Army Headquarters was located in Manbij (territory under YPG/SDF control), that there were more than 2,000 of US soldiers in Rojava, the USA had at its disposal ten military bases in Rojava (including two airbases), they had deals with Russian Air Force and Russian Army generally and Damascus government’s bloody slaughterers as well (through “operation rooms” to coordinate military activities between the three armies)...

The proletariat as a revolutionary class has no interest to frontally confront the State and its central repressive apparatuses. What we have to develop on the contrary is the revolutionary defeatism, that is to push dissolving the bourgeois armies (especially while weakening its discipline and coherence), through violence of course, through direct action, sabotage, generalized and insurrectional strike... in the armies, factories, mines, offices, schools... anywhere we suffer exploitation from this world of death and misery... but also through the force and energy of the movement developing its class perspectives. Don’t forget one thing folks, it’s that where there are warplanes and warships, machineguns and missiles and poison gas to repress our class movement, behind them there are always and ever men and women who have to produce them, to transport them to their destination, to fuel them... It’s the duty of struggling proletarians to prevent the war machine

to kill our fellow brothers and sisters, to stop the production system to work and function...

LET’S RECALL ALSO THAT HISTORICALLY, after any proletarian defeat, Capital gives itself the material means to transform into contrary energy, into energy aimed at strengthening its social relation, the initial proletarian energy if not of destruction of this social relation, at least of questioning the latter. Capital feeds on our revolts, our defeats, it adopts the vocabulary of the proletariat, its flags, its mottos (taking care to empty them of their genuine subversive content) to bring to its side the proletarians who are disoriented by defeat but still vindictive. The red flag thus deployed by “red” bourgeois attracts the proletarians who are still struggling but who are thus called to be satisfied with only a few bits of tinsel, a few ersatz of revolution...

This “*democracy without a State*” (Abdullah Öcalan, 2010), this “*State without a State*”, this “*democratic autonomy*”, this “*democratic confederalism*” is still and always a State, in the sense that the communist criticism gives to this concept. That is to say the existing social relation, the present state of things, and therefore the organization in acts of this relation. Organisation that aims to enlarge and perpetuate this relation. And without the revolution sweeping away the old order, this social relation, this state of things can only be and remain that of the capitalists, regardless of the reforms that make it looking like a different, improved form. Capitalism is constantly reforming... It even sometimes “revolutionizes” itself, but this “revolution”, with its jolts (resulting in tens of millions of deaths) which are extremely violent for the exploited of course but also sometimes for certain competing and/or obsolete fractions of the capitalist class, it is never anything more than a “revolution” within the very social relation that needs to be strengthened and broadened.

It would be fatal to confuse a social movement and process with its bourgeois leadership, a proletarian revolution with the



counterrevolution, social liberation with national liberation ("national-social liberationism"), a militant dynamics against the dictatorship of the present state of things with a series of reformist measures to consolidate this state of things, which appears obviously under a renewed disguise, with new labels and with face-lifted institutions and ideologies like "popular assemblies", "cooperatives", "democratic confederalism", "social economy", "women's liberation", etc. and finally makes it more acceptable oppressed participating to their own oppression, alienated to their own alienation, exploited to their own exploitation...

THERE ARE SOME WHO WILL SAY THAT WE ARE ad hoc "anti-Rojava" or that we deny the existence of the "Rojava Revolution". Far from it, we are not more "anti-Rojava" than we are effectively anti-Britain or anti-USA or anti-any-other-Nation-State.

The position of communists and anarchists is clear: May all capitalist States die, may the Turkish State die with its ferocious repression against populations revolted in the southeast of the country and elsewhere, may the Syrian State and its massacres die, may the States of USA, EU, Gulf monarchies, Russia and Iran die, and may also all "progressive" and leftist States die: Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia as well as the "proto"-States like Rojava and Islamic State...

As for the real revolution in Rojava, we are of course eminent supporters of it as well as for the revolution in the Middle East and all over the world. We are standing for a world social revolution, and therefore an anti-capitalist one, that will abolish private property, the State, social classes, religions, etc.

★ **Class War – Summer 2021** ★

APPENDICES

As follows we would like here to present a contribution that we received some times ago: "*A View of Rojava or Criticism as an Opportunity for Growth and Development*", which addresses mainly the anarchist movement in the Czech Republic. We translated it in English (and in French as well) and finally publish it below, with a great delay, but also with the conviction that even today it is not too late.

The text touches on the questions that revolutionaries around the world have asked and continue to ask in relation to Rojava, and which, of course, can be applied to other "autonomous territories", either historically (Spain 1936) or currently (Zapatistas).

We fully share the criticism of the Rojava that the text develops. What we do not agree with, however, is its subtext – the effort to "balance" Rojava's unilateral adoration with a critical voice in an effort to create an "opportunity" for discussion.

However, in our opinion, the attitude of the anarchist movement and the far left in the Czech Republic to the events in Rojava (and the same is happening elsewhere in the world) is not based on any misunderstanding of the state of things, little information available or lack of opportunities for discussion, as the text assumes, but it is a much deeper problem – the problem of what content the followers of Rojava attribute to the social revolution. What should the revolution change and how? Those who think that the aim of the revolution is to democratize society or liberate women are, in essence, only striving for a kind of improvement of today's society, for the completion of the bourgeois revolution, that is, the one that has definitively asserted the domination of Capital. The real revolutionaries, on the other hand, seek to destroy this society based on classes and exploitation, to totally transform it.

The text "*View of Rojava...*" doesn't represent for us a call for discussion within the "anarchist movement", which is able to label "revolutionary" even clearly reactionary events (as we developed it above) just because they are accompanied by red and black PR propaganda. Such a discussion is not possible for us.

On the contrary, we consider it a critique of the attitude described above, an attempt to clarify the concept of social revolution in the context of events in Rojava. And as such we also publish it in connection with our own remarks, which are based on the international discussion on Rojava, as it has been led by various groups and militants in recent years.

And last but not least as the events of Spain 1936 are very often evoked by the partisans of Rojava, we publish at the end of this bulletin a contribution of the Internationalist Communist Group about the revolution and counterrevolution in Spain, false polarization fascism vs. antifascism at that time...

Download our materials in PDF format at autistici.org/tridnivalka



A VIEW OF ROJAVA OR CRITICISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Events in Rojava are a current topic that many people, groups and initiatives are engaged in. The positives of the Rojava reality could be certainly described in detail, and many have already done so elsewhere. References to some of these contributions are given below this text (1). However, there are many more of these articles in comparison with texts that would describe in more detail the weaknesses and contradictions of the Rojava events. This material tries to balance this disparity. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the positive areas of Rojava are unimportant or negligible.

Sometimes it is said that “Rojava is not a paradise, but a hope” and we can agree with that. And precisely because Rojava has also its shortcomings, we also need to talk about them so that we can reflect on them and approach the fulfillment of hopes for the future, where they will no longer play a significant role. If we pinpoint only the strengths and keep quiet about the weaknesses, we will succumb to one-sided propaganda similar to those that had destroyed many promising hopes in the past. This text was written as a sincere contribution to the fulfillment of Rojava’s hopes.

A specific revolution?

Rojava is often referred as a revolutionary event. More precisely, as a revolution that goes beyond the European or American concept of revolution. This specificity is said to need to be respected and accepted. Those who do not accept it are often described as exalted paternalists. However, Rojava’s partisans rarely ask themselves the question whether a truly social revolution can mean significantly different things in different regions and yet still be attractive to those who want to finish with capitalism.

Although the realities of life are different in different parts of the world, as well as are different cultural and geopolitical contexts, it is wrong to think of the social revolution as if it would mean something different in a different territory. Of

course, different contexts tied to specific regions can generate differences in the revolutionary process, in how people get organized, what terminology and symbols they choose, but the content of the revolution is identical everywhere in the world. There are no different social revolutions in different places; there is only the world revolution and the world counter-revolution.

The criticisms contained in this text therefore does not relate at all to formal differences. For example, the text doesn’t criticize that Rojava is talking about democratic confederalism, and not about anarchy and communism. What is criticized instead is the non-revolutionary content, incorrectly defended by some, as if it was revolutionary. Even if revolutionary content was portrayed with the least enticing words, there would be plenty of reasons to stand up for it, just as the non-revolutionary content is worthy of critique even if it is shrouded in the revolutionary terminology as in the case of Rojava. The color of the flag and the names are not significant. We do not criticize the words primarily. It’s not so much about how someone talks about himself; it’s about how he acts. And it is the substantive essence of an action that is being criticized here.

Certainly, the revolution cannot proceed according to predetermined plans and definitions. In many ways, it is unpredictable. Therefore, in order to avoid accusations of dogmatism and expressions of clinging to ideological purity, we would like to put forward that the motivation for our criticism is not the belief that events deviated from some universal schemes of how the revolution should proceed in terms of organizational forms or terminology. It is a mistake to cling to such a “revolutionary scheme” and it was necessary to criticize it. The revolution has no universal scenarios that can be written at the table and then adhered to without deviations. The formal side of the revolution is created in motion, and thus with a certain amount of unpredictability, improvisation and reconsideration. In addition, every revolution suffers from its

contradictions and limits. However, it is necessary to start to act even when they manifest themselves. The task of the revolutionary forces is then to reveal them and act in order to overcome them, and not to ignore them and remain silent about them, as is often the case in the case of Rojava.

In its text on the “Kurdish question”, the Italian collective *Il Lato Cattivo* states:

“A vast cloud of “movements” — armed and unarmed, and oscillating between social banditry and organized guerrilla activity — act in the most wretched zones of the global capitalist junkyard (...). Though the discourses and forms of struggle adopted by these movements are not mere epiphenomena, it is essential to grasp the content they have in common: self-defense. A self-defense that may also be considered vital, but which does not differ in its nature from what is expressed in any industrial action aimed at protecting the wages or working conditions of those who animate it.



Just as it would be a sleight of hand to pass off a wage struggle, even if extremely fierce and broad-based, as a "revolutionary movement", it is equally fallacious to overload this type of self-defense practiced by exhausted populations with an inherently revolutionary meaning." (2)

The quoted part is interesting because it is a comparison that fits well with the events in Rojava and its frequent interpretation as revolutionary events. There is no doubt at all that there are many sincere revolutionaries in Rojava. However, this does not yet make out of the Kurdish National Liberation Movement a revolutionary movement. The local people, with strong international support, are organizing a fierce struggle, which is primarily a self-defense against the genocide of the Kurdish ethnic group. However, the social revolution is a matter of content – the attack on capitalist relations. But this does not happen in Rojava. Only the relations of political, administrative and economic governance are affected, but private property continues to exist. Together with the private property there are also social classes that are the basis of capitalist construction. Rojava is undergoing a democratic transformation, not a social revolution. This means in particular the following:

- Democratically and horizontally managed cooperatives or communes in Rojava operate on a market basis, a wage relationship and a money exchange, i.e. on the basis that is not different from any enterprise in other areas that proudly espouses the ideology of capitalist economics. (3) Capitalism in which workers, alone and without bosses, manage their misery, is still capitalism, because the question is not just about who manages and how, but above all what is managed. In the case of Rojava cooperatives, the capitalist enterprises are only under the self-management of the workers. (4) Capitalist content is organized in a democratic way.
- Democratic confederalism in Rojava is not a classless community (nor does it head towards), but a form of governance in which members of different classes meet "at one table" in order to plan joint and/or conflicting actions on "common ethnic/national issues". It is just another variation of what we know from parliamentary politics. The fact that this administration allows more direct participation of citizens does not change the fact that the core of the content is identical. This fact is hidden by the constant repeating of phrases about the "Kurdish people", as if it was not clear that the "people" is not a homogeneous totality, but a class society whose dynamics are determined by a conflict of antagonistic interests (class conflict). Just like in other parts of the world. A constitution called the **Social Contract** was developed in Rojava. It proclaims "*mutual and peaceful coexistence and understanding between all strands of society*." Not the demolition of the class hierarchical construction, but the collaboration between different classes from different levels of the hierarchy. Let's face it, the Rojava region is inhabited by a class society, and significant forces hiding behind revolutionary terminology do not want to change it yet.

Attentive readers have certainly noticed that most of the world calls for support for Rojava speak precisely of the support for the Kurdish movement, the Kurdish people, the Kurd-



ish social experiment, Kurdish autonomy, etc. However, we rarely hear something about classes, let alone class analysis. For example, at all public events held so far in support of Rojava in Prague since the beginning of the Turkish invasion, the word class has not been pronounced even once. This is quite shocking given that these people are talking about a social revolution. But they speak of a revolution in the context of a community that, while experimenting with democratic governance, does not question private property and thus leaves the social classes intact. It is astonishing how often the term "popular" is used in the names of Rojava organizations of local resistance (5) and how much the term class and class struggle is missing. As if we forgot that the people (similar to the "Kurdish") are a supra-class category [over the classes] that includes both the exploited and the exploiters.

But let's go back to the quote from *Il Lato Cattivo*. We could sum it up by the fact that in order for the events in Rojava to become truly revolutionary, it is necessary to move beyond the existing content, which represents self-defense of lives, culture, language, ethnicity, territory, local economy, jobs, civic and religious rights. Events would have to move on. To the content that represents the offensive phase. It will not be about civic activism and mere democratic administration, but about proletarian class struggle. In practice, this presupposes expressions of struggle subverting the pillars of Capital, such as classes, property, exchange, labor, money, the market, the State – and at the same time the creation of not only different organizational forms, but above all of a different social content. This is not yet happening in Rojava. This, of course, should not lead to a denial of support for the fighting revolutionaries in Rojava. On the contrary, it is a call to support the class brothers and sisters who act there and who are trying to understand why no revolutionary events have taken place in Rojava yet, and what needs to be changed in order that revolutionary action takes place there and elsewhere in the world. The point is not to turn away from Rojava, but also not to accept the uncritical support of everything that is happening there. Neither rejection nor romanticism. Just keep a sober, non-propaganda view.

Just as we cannot speak of a revolution or a non-capitalist community in Rojava, we cannot say that it is a stateless organisation. The administration itself, with the help of federations of decentralized communes, does not yet mean the extinction of the State. If we stick to the fact that the State is an expression and an instrument of class domination, it is apparent that its existence cannot be seen only as a set of certain

structures, institutions and authorities, i.e. police, army, parliament, etc. These are although an important part of the State, but we cannot reduce it to them. The State is also – mainly – the result of specific social relations. This means that it is based on the dynamics of the relation between social classes and their relation to property. Thus, where classes and private property are preserved, there is a State. This, as already indicated above, is the case of Rojava. In the case of some areas of Rojava, the State only uses the people’s assemblies instead of parliament, and the State policy agenda is implemented in a more decentralized, less bureaucratic way.

Internationalism

“The revolution is not certain and Rojava needs the strong spirit of foreign revolutionaries giving their support here in the ground. It’s not enough to make some token gesture. If you are a revolutionary, then enough with your joke excuses, you have work to do,” wrote one of the actors from Rojava. (6)

One cannot help feeling that this appeal actually says that being a revolutionary means giving up the vision of a social revolution as a global process and clinging to the idea of the revolution in one country. That is to say, to cling to the idea that the revolution is a locally isolated event taking place in one region, where all the revolutionaries must move in order to successfully complete it.

Revolutionary internationalism is quite the opposite of such a concept, i.e. the effort not to concentrate revolutionary forces in one place, but to spread them all over the world, because capitalism is a global system that cannot be defeated at the local level, but only by an attack of the global community of struggle. A coordinated attack from many places at the same time, not first “there” and then “somewhere else”.

“So where are all the skilled people? We don’t need your show of solidarity or outside help. We need people here on the ground. We need people that can teach, start and manage projects and provide real solutions”, an anarchist from Rojava urges us. And to emphasize the concept of revolution as a spatially isolated, local event, he adds: *“You cannot do anything from outside that is actually effectual.”*

So it means that only in Rojava one can be a revolutionary participating in a revolutionary activity? There he is “inside” a revolutionary activity, everywhere else he is “outside” and his activity is insignificant, ineffective and non-revolutionary? It is

quite shocking to hear such elitism and alienation from an internationalist perspective from an anarchist. Fortunately, not all anarchists are like that. It is worth recalling what the recently deceased **Stuart Christie** wrote about the Spanish Civil War in the text “Brothers in Arms”:

“In contrast to the Comintern, the anarchist international, the AIT, did not mount a central recruitment campaign. The CNT-FAI [...] disapproved of recruiting foreigners into its militias – except, of course, for stateless refugee volunteers such as the Italians and Germans – preferring instead for comrades to show their solidarity and defend the revolutionary nature of the Spanish Civil War by actions and applying political and industrial pressure at home.” (7)

This anarchist attitude is much more sympathetic. Translated to today and the situation means that if the revolutionary tendencies in Rojava are to be strengthened and the counter-revolutionary ones are to be rolled over, it is necessary for the struggle of revolutionary forces to intensify not only there but also in other parts of the world. Strikes, riots, occupations, blockades, sabotages, seizures of resources, education and building combat infrastructure. All this takes place in different parts of the world. Viewed from the perspective of the revolutionary internationalism, these are all activities that cannot be separated from the manifesting militant tendencies in Rojava. Likewise, the activities of the Rojava revolutionaries cannot be perceived as something that takes place separately and without connection with the proletarian struggles elsewhere in the world. In this sense, the opposite of “inside versus outside” does not actually exist. It’s a fake division that complicates the things.

The terrain of the class struggle is global, as well as capitalism. The offensive fight against it in one region is at the same time a support for the fight that is taking place in other regions. The effectiveness is not determined by whether it is fought “inside” or “from outside” a particular region, but what forms and contents the fight takes. In this sense, for example, a struggle affecting the sphere of production in Czech armories or services at airports (or other companies supporting the Turkish army and economy) may be more effective and have a more positive impact on Rojava than when proletarians fraternize with the Kurdish bourgeoisie in an assembly of communes in order to organize trade between cooperatives and private entrepreneurs.

Tekoşîna Anarşîst lamented in an interview in July 2020 that *“A large number of internationalists who come to Rojava participate in defending the revolution for a few months and then return home to their previous lives. Is that what we want? Is this our idea of internationalist solidarity? No, we want something else.”*

According to these militants therefore revolutionary activity means giving up one’s own home and life in favor of a common cause? Does returning home necessarily mean the end of the revolutionary initiative? This complain about people returning to their lives is then an open admission that the events in Rojava require their own life to be completely abandoned? If so, apparently some revolutionaries have a lot in common with religious fundamentalists.

There are many cases of how leaving for Rojava really changed people’s lives. However, not only positively, e.g. by gaining valuable experience and inspiration, but also negatively, e.g. by crippling relationships with his loved ones in the places from



which they went to Rojava. Behind the pleasing words about the fellowship, community spirit and solidarity embodied in Rojava, there is also an alienation strengthened outside this region. This too is a sad reality that needs to be reflected.

Possibilities of criticism

The positive part of Rojava reality also includes [Tekmîl](#). A ritual that constructively works with criticism, self-criticism and reflection. Mutual criticism is understood as an improvement of collective practice. However, even this ritualized process has its pitfalls. Sometimes it seems as if it is intended only for those who integrate into Kurdish communities. When friendly criticism is expressed by people outside of them, it is not considered to be a constructive contribution to the discussion, but automatically as a manifestation of arrogance. The communist theorist **Gilles Dauvé** together with another author wrote an interesting critical reflection (8), which can be considered a factual analysis, not a hostile attack. Yet a great deal of anger and accusations of arrogance and paternalistic superiority fell on their heads. Why? Can only those who eat their breakfast together with Kurdish militants every morning and then embark on joint community projects, criticize? Do the others have to either uncritically accept everything or express their critique and accept the label of disrespectful exalted ones? The things are not black and white. There is not just considerate respect on the one hand and ruthless criticism on the other. There are also positions somewhere in between. It is possible to express criticism of certain mistakes and contradictions, but to do so in a considerate way that respects the different self-determination of the criticized persons. This is exactly what both Gilles Dauvé and this text are trying to do.

The reactions that often follow the criticism of some parts of the Rojava reality resemble a lot to the situation in the Czech Republic, where certain activist circles use the same argumentation when they are confronted with the critique of attitude of proletarians of Roma origin in the framework of struggles against oppression. We mean for instance the critique of their patriarchal expressions, hierarchy and obedience to Roma bosses, or even such things as throwing away one-day old food. All these patterns are defended by the cultural customs of the Roma, which must be respected. And those who do not respect them are described as arrogant exalted persons who do not respect Roma self-determination and want to impose a dominant model of the majority on the Roma people.

If respect is to mean the boundless tolerance of everything marked as a cultural tradition or local self-determination, we could go as far as to respect cannibalistic practices and executions by stoning in some communities or national chauvinistic traditions that manifest themselves in the Czech majority. Respect for different cultural customs is appropriate, but it must have certain limits, otherwise the reference to cultural traditions can easily become a tool of manipulation in the defense of the indefensible.

If this text expresses a critique of the specifics of the events of Rojava, it is done with respect for many cultural traditions of the community in Rojava, which are certainly very different from what we practice on a cultural level in the local context. Criticism does not have to mean ruthlessness, just as respect does not mean accepting everything that the other person says and does.

Just as this text brings critical remarks about some of the steps of revolutionaries in Rojava, it would be great to receive the same critical responses from Rojava here in the territory of the so-called Czech Republic. The revolutionary movement is internationalist, so comrade criticism must flow in all direc-

tions in order to be a constructive part of the process of creating a common theory and practice. If we grasp the social revolution as a global process, everyone who strives for it has something to say about it, which sometimes, of course, means to criticize comrades operating in another part of the world.

The international brigade **Tekoşîna Anarşîst** in an interview said: *"After some years working here we saw good sides and also bad sides of the revolution, and our commitment with it is based in a frame of internationalism and critical solidarity."* If this is indeed the case, it might not hurt to see in the flood of calls for support for Rojava also more critical voices. When it is about a critical support, not about an unconditional, uncritical, unlimited one.

"The practice of Tekmîl, platform, criticism and self-criticism, guide us in our growth and development as revolutionaries," says **Tekoşîna Anarşîst**. If these words are sincere and if people in solidarity with the fight in Rojava identify with them, they will certainly accept this text with enthusiasm as an opportunity for development and growth. Failure to do so will mean that words and actions are not always in harmony and that we have to continue to search for this harmony.

Note on authorship: *It is our great desire not to waste energy on speculation about who wrote this text, but rather to use this energy to analyze the content of the text, to discuss about it and to draw practical conclusions. Feedback is welcome at lokomotiva1@riseup.net*

Links and notes:

- (1) Listing these texts does not imply agreement with every part of them!
- (2) *The "Kurdish Question" ISIS, USA, etc.:*
https://endnotes.org.uk/other_texts/en/il-lato-cattivo-the-kurdish-question
- (3) We draw this conclusion for example from the stories of two journalism students who visited Rojava in 2019 and lectured on it in Prague.
<https://www.afed.cz/text/7035/navsteva-rojavu> [in Czech]
In the lecture, they described how the Rojava cooperatives work and their collaborative relationship with private capitalist companies.
- (4) Cooperatives operate in a capitalist way and in some cases those who work in them do not even want to change their position as wage workers subject to the orders of others. This was described, for example, by one of the anarchists living in Rojava stating in his text that: *"one difficulty in Rojava is that the economic groups are trying to organise worker cooperatives that serve the needs of people's lives. However people are often saying just tell us what to do and pay us a salary. They just want to work and be given a salary. They don't want to take charge of their lives..."*
<https://amargipl.wordpress.com/2015/06/27/rojava-reality/>
This is confirmed by an interview with **Tekoşîna Anarşîst** (Anarchist Struggle), which states: *"In Rojava there are communal initiatives and incentives for collective ownership, but private property is still the norm in society, without much effort to change this reality. Within revolutionary movements, property is largely collective, and the communal life has a clear socialist orientation, but it is sometimes difficult for these ideas to reach the majority of the population."* <https://tekosinaanarsist.noblogs.org/interview-with-tekosina-anarsist-by-fau-federacion-anarquista-uruguay/>
- (5) Even the anarchist ones, such as the IRPGF (International Revolutionary People's Guerrilla Forces) brigades.
- (6) *The grim reality of the Rojava Revolution – from an anarchist eyewitness* – text originally published at <https://libcom.org/library/grim-reality-rojava-revolution-anarchist-eyewitness> and also available at <https://www.autistici.org/tridnivalka/the-grim-reality-of-the-rojava-revolution/>
- (7) The whole text is to be read at <https://libcom.org/history/brothers-arms>.
- (8) Translated in English by *Sinister Quarter* and available at <https://thesinisterquarter.wordpress.com/2015/02/16/kurdistan/> – also available at <https://www.autistici.org/tridnivalka/kurdistan-en/>

THESES ON THE REVOLUTION AND COUNTERREVOLUTION IN THE SPANISH REGION DURING THE 1930s

We publish here a historical document, elaborated in 1997 by comrades of the Internationalist Communist Group (ICG), which synthesizes in the form of theses the programmatic ruptures reached by our community of struggle regarding the revolution and counterrevolution in Spain during the 1930s.

These theses are a working document, a draft, and were intended to be criticized in order to obtain broader contributions for the publication of materials on this issue.

So far, only one complete review dedicated to this crucial issue has been published by the ICG (unfortunately only in Spanish), it's the review [Comunismo no.66...](#)

1. The re-appropriation of our class history is a fundamental task for the organization and centralization of the proletariat in its struggle for the world communist revolution. In this way we can learn from these experiences, both mistakes and successes, and transform past defeats into a weapon of struggle for the present and the future.

2. Capitalism deforms and disfigures the entire historical memory of our class. The fundamental ideological work carried out by the State consists in camouflaging the real class contradictions, in presenting them as internal antagonisms of the bourgeois system of power, in concealing the force of the revolution. In Russia, before and after 1917, they tried to deny the revolutionary force of the proletariat and its capacity to fight for a communist society, we were told that there was feudalism down there and, in the end, on the basis of that same social democratic conception which [...] [predominated] by the Bolsheviks, an open policy of defense and development of capitalism has been applied. In the same way, in Spain, social democracy affirmed that the proletarian revolution could not be carried out because there was still feudalism and the proletariat first had to assume, carry out, the bourgeois democratic tasks. All the currents that defended the thesis of feudal Spain and bourgeois democratic tasks to be carried out quite logically stood diametrically opposed to the interests of the proletariat and its revolutionary movement, and struggled to transform the class struggle and antagonistic projects of both bourgeoisie and proletariat (capitalism and communism) into an inter-bourgeois struggle between forms of government and management of Capital. To this conception, to this decisive social practice in the counterrevolution, corresponds a certain vision of the history of Spain, a vision in which what happened would be a civil war between fascists and anti-fascists, between Francoists and Republicans.

3. For us, on the contrary, the proletarian movement in the Spanish region during the thirties is the last revolutionary attempt of the greatest world wave of proletarian struggles so far, a period that began at the dawn of the 20th century (1904/1905), had its central phase between 1917/1921, and ended with the defeat of 1937. The world revolutionary movement in 1917/19 forced the war to stop. In the thirties, after the large and important defeats suffered until then by the international proletariat culminating with the popular-front repression and liquidation of the proletariat in China, Capital tended ineluctably to imperialist war, repolarizing the world between fascists and anti-fascists, affirming this way the need

to impose its infernal cycle in order to continue reproducing itself in an expanded form. Faced with this tendency of the world bourgeoisie to resume the imperialist war, the proletariat only manages to respond by affirming its class terrain (the struggle for social revolution) in some countries like El Salvador, Austria, and mainly in Spain..., while in the rest of the world it finds itself disciplined in the popular and national fronts. After this series of historical milestones, in which the proletariat regionally confronts unified capital, the bourgeoisie succeeds in cornering it and subjecting it to its war. The last great battle of this resistance of the proletariat who refuses to submit to the capitalist war, where our class affirms the struggle against capitalism, was the struggle in Spain during the thirties. The defeat, the liquidation of proletarian autonomy that will occur particularly during the period from July 1936 to May 1937, transforming the class war in Spain into imperialist war, definitely paved the way to the generalization of capitalist war that will culminate in what will be later called "World War II".

4. During the twenties and the early thirties, in contradiction with the world situation of proletarian defeat, the agitation and struggle of the proletariat in Spain continued to grow. During the first half of the thirties the class confrontation reached exemplary levels.

Thus, for example, in May **1931** proletarian revolts took place in Madrid, Barcelona... where churches and convents were burned. Later that same year important proletarian movements took place throughout Andalusia as well as important strikes, in solidarity with the prisoners, first in Barcelona and then in Zaragoza, Algeciras, Bilbao, Huelva, Cadiz,... spreading to the whole country.

In **1932** the class confrontation continued to radicalize, characterized by increasingly violent battles between armed proletarians and agents of the order, both from action groups of one class and the other, as well as mass movements such as the one that took place in the province of Logroño in January, which ended up spreading throughout the country. In the mining basin of Alto Lobregat and Cardoner the proletarian revolt affirmed the revolutionary project trying to assume central aspects of the revolutionary dictatorship: money and private property are declared abolished and the need for revolutionary terror is assumed. Despite the violence of the republican repression, the movements continued throughout Spain and strikes were the daily bread of the proletarians: Alicante, Valencia, Granada, Tarrasa... In villages and entire regions libertarian communism is proclaimed, even if in some cases it was a mere declaration, while elsewhere the vanguard minori-

ties try to impose by violence elementary measures against capitalism. The rural proletariat assumed in this phase an important role by expropriating the agricultural domains for example in the regions of Victoria, Zaragoza, Barcelona, Avila, Toledo, Seville, etc. Also the mining proletariat played an important role already at that time: in March there were important strikes in Asturias. Clashes between the forces of order and the proletarians in struggle took place all over the country: Toledo, Cordoba, Orense... throughout the year.

1933 opened with important struggles in Barcelona, Casas Viejas (Cadiz)... which culminated in the declaration of the insurrectionary strike throughout the country driven and framed by the CNT/FAI. The escape of prisoners from the Modelo prison is organized, once more churches are attacked and convents are set on fire. Libertarian communism is proclaimed in various places such as Sardanola-Ripollet and in towns and villages the red and black flag is waved. Azaña's republic (to which the CNT/FAI would later submit) showed its capacity to bring State terrorism to its maximum expression: the order was given to shoot and kill insurgent proletarians. The brutal repressive blows did not prevent the proletariat from resuming the strike in May and occupying the streets in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Burgos, Alicante, Seville, Granada, Bilbao... In December the movement of the proletariat reached its highest levels in Aragon and the surrounding areas: archives were burned, convents were set on fire, and there was an open struggle against the elections.

1934 also opened with important workers' strikes: metalworkers and typographers in Madrid, gas and electricity in Barcelona, general strike in Zaragoza, as well as strike attempts by agricultural proletarians. But undoubtedly the highest point of that year was the proletarian insurrection in October 1934, known as the "insurrection in Asturias". Despite the violence of the movement in Bilbao and given the unsuccessful attempts in Barcelona and Madrid, the movement was quickly confined to the region of Asturias, especially in the large mining concentrations. The general strike carried out by the prole-

tariat unified under the banner of U.H.P. (Union of Proletarian Brothers) immediately assumed an armed and insurrectionary character, escaping the grip of unions and parties (mainly the P.S.O.E.) which tried to control it. The mining proletariat took the city of Oviedo using dynamite and some weapons, also in other cities like Gijon the movement was directly insurrectionary. The arms factories were attacked, as well as the centers of power, expropriation were made and there were attempts to organize the production on other bases; but the rapid failure of the insurrection in the rest of the country and the limits of the proletarian armament allowed the State to isolate the move-

ment and concentrate all its forces to defeat it. After a terrible 20-day struggle and a bloody repression, the State imposed the restoration of order. The repression and generalized terrorism of the State will characterize the rest of 1934 and throughout the year **1935**. After the isolation and defeat of the Commune of Asturias in October 1934, great struggles continued to take place all over Spain, but at the same time the popular-front and anti-fascist ideology was imposed more and more in the organizational structures of the proletariat until the electoral triumph of the Popular Front and the amnesty of political prisoners, which already constituted forms of democratic channeling of the proletarian struggle developed so far.

In **1936** the proletariat is capable to arm itself, to confront and defeat fascism but at the same time it is paralyzed facing the republic. The tendency to "go all the way" and to the "dictatorship of

anarchy", which had been expressed everywhere before, was losing strength in front of anti-fascists who, by the way, found support for their theses in July 1936 into the threat of the French and English fleets. With the shameless "antifascist collaborationism" of the CNT, FAI, and POUM since July 1936, the proletariat lost autonomy against the bourgeois State which, on this basis, managed to disarm it and frame it into antifascist and fascist armies. The last great generalized resistance of the proletariat took place in the glorious days of May 1937, when the proletariat found itself alone in the streets confronting all the structures of the bourgeois State,



including not only its Stalinist and socialist Republican repressors but also what once had been its organizations, the CNT, FAI, POUM...

5. Once again, the defeat of the proletariat in Spain occurred because it failed to organize itself as a class and as an autonomous party against all the bourgeois forces. And all this thanks to the social democratic conception and policies of the lesser evil, of the support for progressive democracy, of the alliance of the ill-named "workers' parties". The Workers' Alliance of October 1934 between PSOE, BOC (later POUM), PCE and sections of the CNT, was followed by the Popular Front of early 1936 against fascism, which brought together PSOE, PCE, POUM, CNT and a whole series of open bourgeois parties (ERC, Azaña...). The constitution of the Popular Front and the anti-fascist alliance meant the rapid and total dissolution of the proletariat's class autonomy and its recruitment into the inter-bourgeois war, firstly in Spain and later in the Second World War in the rest of the world.

6. The Popular Front (and more precisely the duality fascism/anti-fascism) is the tactic used at that time by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat to liquidate its class autonomy. The phenomena of fascism, Nazism, popular-frontism, Stalinism, which developed in those years, have all of them the same basic characteristics of national conciliation, mass mobilization, apology for work and large-scale production, and they lead all of them to the renunciation of proletarian interests, to the national effort and ultimately to imperialist war, where the only role of the proletariat is that of cannon fodder. Despite the active resistance of the communist and internationalist factions, the proletariat failed to break with those currents and ended up playing exactly that role of cannon fodder. Spain is then the last country where the proletariat fought a great revolutionary battle throughout the period and at the same time the first country where world capitalism succeeded in concretizing the channeling of all proletarian energies in the fascist/anti-fascist war whose climax will be the world war.

7. The struggle in Spain during the thirties insofar as it culminated in the transformation of social war into imperialist war and in the destruction/liquidation of the proletariat finalized the counterrevolutionary process that was already generalized in the world. The role played by social democracy, as a bourgeois party for the workers, had been fundamental in this respect. That role was played by PSOE, PCE, POUM and CNT. While the first and second have an openly bourgeois program and they were opposed to the proletarian revolution (bourgeois democratic tasks...) it will be in the two others that the proletariat structured its struggle. There are no other mass organizations of autonomously organized proletarians. The armed insurrection was organized on the basis of militant structures of the CNT, FAI and small groups, which claimed to be part of these structures although they were not officially recognized. Minorities and groups claiming to belong to the CNT were the vanguard of proletarian expropriations and autonomous action of the working class against capitalism. The unorganized proletarian masses also saw in the CNT their organization. However, both because of its overall social practice (the CNT was mainly a trade union and functioned as an apparatus of the bourgeois State) and its conception (predominance of an anarchist ideology incapable of conceiving the struggle against Capital and the State), this organization which framed the vanguard of the proletariat could not give any

other direction than that of anti-fascism. Indeed, long before 1936, the CNT had confirmed its social democratic nature and during the elections of that year, as well as subsequently, it proved to be an apparatus capable of functioning as the left wing of republicanism and the Popular Front. Moreover, during the months prior to the insurrectionary assault of July 1936, an openly anti-fascist (i.e. bourgeois) line had been imposed which no longer designated as an enemy the bourgeoisie and the capitalist social system, but fascism. Although this practice was denounced within the CNT itself (for example, at the Zaragoza Congress), popular-frontism was totally imposed in the renunciation of revolutionary abstentionism and in the active participation in elections on the side of the Popular Front.

8. In the struggles in Spain, the proletariat reached very important degrees of autonomy and gave evidences of the scope of the revolution it contains. It is important to emphasize the concretization and radicalization of the struggle, the autonomy of the proletarians in arming themselves and taking the centers of power on various occasions such as in October 1934 and July 1936, the ruptures of groups or factions that went further than their own organizations, the rapid spread of guidelines and practical attempts to fight against private property, the expropriations of land and factories, the attempts to abolish money, the search for collective production organizations and the search for other forms of production and distribution, etc. However, the prevailing anti-authoritarian, anti-dictatorial, social democratic ideology dispersed this formidable energy into thousands of small actions without organic force capable to break capitalism. The prevailing managementist conception was perfectly complemented by the anti-fascist policies and together they prevented the proletariat from imposing its own interests on the basis of its revolutionary dictatorship. This extraordinary movement of the proletariat did not have a revolutionary direction in the strongest sense of the term and instead there was a formal direction which did not correspond to the real practice of the movement and which led it to the dead end of anti-fascism and radical managementism: the formation of collectivities in peaceful coexistence with the capitalist economy.

9. In 1936, the proletariat armed itself and conquered the street against the bourgeoisie, private property and the State. But it found itself politically disarmed by the social democracy organizations which with their anarchist and secondarily socialist and Leninist ideologies led it bound hand and foot to accept the discipline of anti-fascism (anti-fascist militias), the bourgeois republic (democratic legality), capitalist management (collectivities). Although the military, political and economic aspects of the class struggle are inextricably linked, we could schematize the imposition of the counterrevolution by dissociating these aspects in order to present it more clearly. Militarily, the class struggle had been liquidated by subjecting the proletariat to the military front led by the republican bourgeoisie. Politically, the entry and collaboration of these organizations with the republican government was a confirmation of both their incapacity to give the situation a revolutionary solution and their counterrevolutionary policies of class conciliation. In the economic sphere, the ideology which claims that production can be organized on a revolutionary basis without the dictatorship of the proletariat, which centrally destroys private property (commodity, money, wage labor...), led to channel the proletarian energy into the manage-

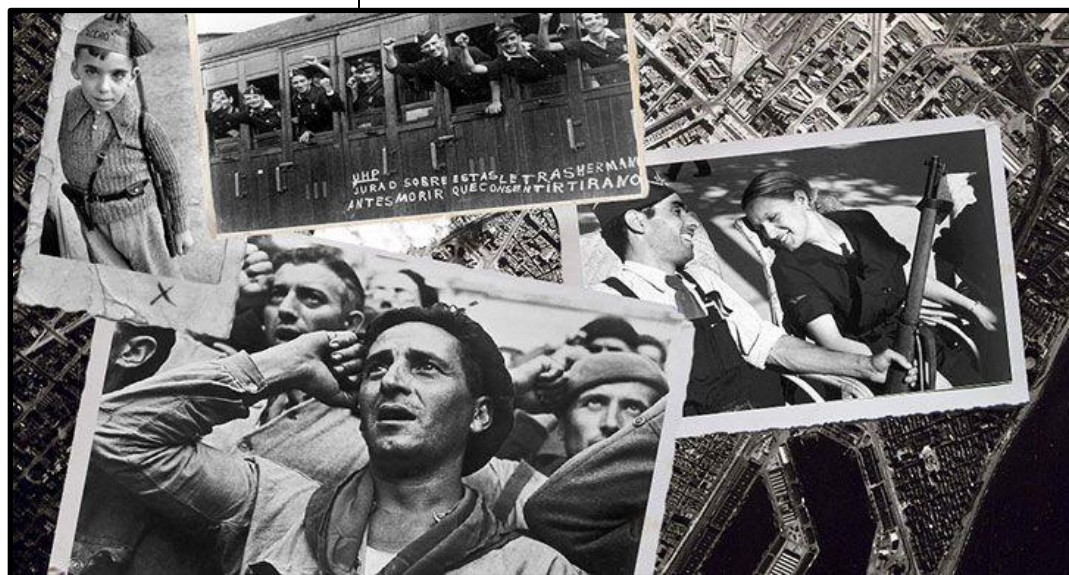
ment and reproduction of the mercantile economy. All the revolutionary energy of the proletariat had been liquidated by anti-fascism (imperialist war) and managementism (collectivities) imposed by the CNT and POUM, which have largely complemented the criminal role played in the anti-fascist camp by the PCE and PSOE. Given the coherence between the social practice and ideology (as well as previous practices) of all the great labelled left-wing parties, it is absurd to speak of treachery. In the same way that formal social democracy did not betray in 1914, but fulfilled its historical role as a bourgeois party for the workers, and the murders of revolutionaries and the torture houses used by the PCE confirmed its counterrevolutionary role, the centrist role played by the CNT and POUM, organizations which started from the struggle of the proletariat, from its needs and organizations that made revolutionary declarations in order to promptly submit it to the needs of war and capitalist economy, had been confirmed by the counterrevolutionary practice of these organizations. This was essential to better frame the proletariat and liquidate it on the terrain of the anti-fascist war and capitalist military production; and far from constituting a betrayal it meant the confirmation of the general conception of these organizations and their policies of previous years.

10. The defeat of the insurrection of May 1937 (the most explicitly anti-bourgeois, anti-Stalinist and anti-Republican insurrection) is caused by the fact that radical anti-fascism succeeded to completely disarm the insurrectionary proletariat, notably thanks to the leadership of the CNT, the POUM and their Ministers. The paralysis/liquidation of the insurrection and the return to work advocated by these organizations gave a complete free hand for torture, disappearance and murder practiced by the Stalinists in order to disarm the revolution. As during other insurrectionary attempts, in April 1931, October 1934 and July 1936, the proletariat did not affirm a genuinely revolutionary direction of its own, unwilling to compromise and to accept the calls for social peace from anti-fascism. Its formidable revolutionary impulse managed to be liquidated by the selective physical repression, ideology of return to work and anti-fascist battle front imposed by the CNT and POUM.

11. Faced with the development of the confrontations and after the defeat of the proletariat in Spain, the proletarians throughout the world found themselves unable to act in solidarity with it as needed to prevent its isolation and liquidation. This was mainly due to the weakness of the internationalist proletarian movement in that period, since it had been defeated everywhere. Despite the struggles in France in June 1936, in Mexico... the movement was in a situation of isolation at the international level. The world bourgeoisie succeeded in disguising the real class antagonism of the "civil war" in Spain and in selling it to the world public opinion as a war between Re-

publicans and Fascists, which led the revolutionary proletariat in Spain into a very deep political isolation. The more the fascist and anti-fascist flags with national colors were imposed internationally and the more the proletariat was mobilized into the International Brigades, the more the revolutionaries and internationalists in Spain found themselves alone to confront the world capitalism.

In particular, the role of the Communist International, the USSR and the different CPs, as well as their different critical supporters (above all Trotskyism in its multiple variants) was fundamental for that isolation. The more they recruited for anti-fascism, the more the international possibility of internationalist action in community of action and struggle with the proletariat in Spain was liquidated. It is obvious that there is a direct relation between the needs of the USSR as a capitalist power competing with other capitalist powers and the defense of this or that "tactic" in the CI. That of the Popular Front, which had in Spain its clearest confirmation as a force of liquidation of the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, obeyed the imperialist interests of Capital in that region of the world.



12. Against all these bourgeois forces only a handful of comrades scattered throughout the world have rejected equally fascism and anti-fascism and continued the invariant struggle of the Party against world capitalism and the State. We consider very important, not only for the analysis of the past but for the future struggle, the contributions of those various comrades, more or less organized in communist groups or factions in different countries of the world. One of the fundamental axes of the publications that will be carried out will be precisely that of the historical rescue of the best of these materials. Without this decisive work of re-appropriation, the proletariat would always have to start over again its own history, repeat the same errors and improvise on-the-spot the direction to take. Without that decisive contribution, the internationalists of today and tomorrow would not have all that background of experience and revolutionary theory, which constitutes the most decisive and powerful weapon of the gestation of a revolutionary direction that ensures the triumph in the next wave of proletarian struggles. ★

This society offers us only a struggle for bare survival, in which we are nothing but labour force and consumers. Of course, it's all wrapped in beautiful speeches about decent citizen's values and needs of the country and economy, in fashion trends and spiritless lifestyles daily churned out to us by media, politicians, scientists, celebrities... Are branded clothes, new mobile phones and plasma TV sets, leased cars and mortgaged housing, Friday parties, TV shows and family idylls in shopping centres a sufficient substitute for a truly human life? Is it all what we really desire and what we really need?

1. NOT FOR US!

We have no grandiose properties and companies, which would make living for us, therefore we have to go to work. We sell our time and energy, our labour power, to the class of bourgeois, who own means of production. We exchange our labour for a wage, which allows us to buy what we need to survive and what was produced elsewhere by the same working people as we are. However much we earn, as soon as we have spent our pay, we have to rush back to work again. It's our labour what drives all the society and economy: factories, supermarkets, offices, hospitals, construction sites... We are the class of proletarians and we thus rebel!

2. AGAINST WAGE LABOUR

Labour is alienated from us, because the time, during which we are working, doesn't belong to us, it's not a complete part of us – above all it's a means how to obtain money. As we sell our labour as a commodity to individual bosses and also to the whole bourgeoisie, it's them who control it, who own it and who really benefit from it. We just have to work as long and as fast as it's demanded from us. Thus, we struggle against wage labour, which is the basis of our exploitation and of the whole capitalist system.

3. AGAINST LEISURE-TIME FACTORY

We don't work in order to directly satisfy our needs as well as needs of the whole of humanity. Needs of life are mediated to us through wages – money, because products of our labour, which belongs to the bourgeoisie, is alienated from us too. All the society is alienated from us: relations, which it is based on, its structures, institutions, wealth and even knowledge. Therefore, the dictatorship of Capital reigns also outside of work. Leisure, which we are looking for, is its part. It's Capital, not us, that determines, how we eat, make love, dwell, travel, enjoy ourselves... Therefore, we struggle against the whole of capitalist social relations, which traps us in a gigantic factory, where we are like milch cows in every moment of our lives.

4. AGAINST CAPITALISM

Our labour is a commodity like no other: it's the only one able to create new value, bigger than its own. Bosses exploit all of us, as they pay us only for our labour power and the whole surplus, that we have produced, is their surplus value and profit. Profit is re-invested in means of production, in production of new Capital, which is all the property controlled, owned and sold by bourgeois. Capital is our dead labour embodied in things. It's our time and energy that we have killed at work not to satisfy human needs but to produce commodities. The only aim of the capitalist mode of production is to achieve profit and multiply Capital. Human needs are totally secondary and they are "satisfied" through production only in the extent and in the way, which serve Capital's expansion. And it is the reason why even "socialist" regimes, the USSR and its satellites, were capitalist and there is still nowadays capitalism in North Korea, China or Cuba. Where there's wage labour, there inevitably exists also Capital and it can't be otherwise just because there's also a "Marxist" ideology's garb, re-organisation of the bourgeoisie through a political party and state and its efforts (with no lasting chance to succeed) to deform capitalist laws of market, competition and value.

5. AGAINST DEMOCRACY, STATE AND BOURGEOIS POLITICS

Democracy is the capitalist society's own essence and not just one of its political forms. Atomised citizens, who achieve an artificial unity through a separated area of national politics, are a common characteristic of parliamentary, Stalinist, Fascist or for instance Islamist states. These are organisations of the bourgeoisie as a class, growing from social relations of the class society. That's why the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is anti-democratic and anti-state and has nothing in common with bourgeois politics, political parties (whether they are Left-wing or Right-wing, parliamentary or extra-parliamentary, legal or banned), elections and political coups.

6. AGAINST TRADE UNIONS AND LEFTISM

Class unions (in opposition to "scab" trade unions directly established by bourgeoisie) are not working class organisations for long time. They became a part of the capitalist State, an institution for an organised selling of labour power and keeping social peace. As such, they have to be destroyed, not reformed. Weaknesses and defeats of our class gave and still give rise to many currents of Leftism, which play the role of historical Social Democracy. In times of revolutions they have always been the Capital's last resort and bastion, because they don't strive for destruction of Capitalism, but for its radical reform. Therefore, communist proletarians struggle against all forms of Leftism: Stalinism, Trotskyism, Maoism, many varieties of Anarchism, Anti-Globalism, "Third-Worldist" Anti-Imperialist movements...

7. AGAINST UNITED FRONTS

We are opposed to all united fronts with "progressive" political factions of the bourgeoisie and to all counter-revolutionary ideologies emerging around such fronts: Anti-Fascism or for example National Liberation... All of them lead to the defence of one form of the capitalist dictatorship against another one, "lesser evil" against "worse" one, i.e. to the preservation of the capitalist dictatorship as a worldwide totality. These fronts lead to a struggle for Capitalism with a "human face", but always they undermine and defeat the revolutionary proletariat. Only class direct action can oppose destructive competition between proletarians which

is encouraged by racism, fascism and nationalism. Only the Communist Revolution is the alternative to all forms of Capitalism.

8. AGAINST OPPRESSION, NATIONALISM AND WAR

All forms of oppression older than Capitalism itself – for instance on the basis of gender, sexuality, ethnical or religious origin – were not destroyed but have become parts of capitalist exploitation and division of labour. No form of oppression exists outside of capitalist social relations and it can be abolished only alongside with them in the process of the Communist Revolution. Ideologies foisting an identity of worker, woman, native, foreigner, "privileged", "excluded" on us, the proletarians, serve making us to internally finally identify with the capitalist system. Only the struggling dynamics of the proletariat is the process of negation of all those obedient citizens' identities. Therefore, the proletariat opposes them in the same way as Nation, Country or Nationalism. Against social peace inside of national states and against a war among them, we claim the class war against our own bourgeoisie, i.e. revolutionary defeatism.

9. FOR PROLETARIAN ASSOCIATIONISM

Today, despite their limits real struggles of the proletariat contain seeds of Communism, i.e. the movement destroying the present state of things. Therefore, today we support class struggles and formation of proletarian nuclei, circles and networks on a subversive basis – i.e. struggling and associating outside and against trade unions, political parties and other structures of the bourgeois State. Precisely from struggles of this kind, a massive proletarian movement is coming into existence and setting itself on the journey of articulating the proletariat – the exploited class in the present society – with the future state of the things.

10. FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Only in the process of revolutionary proletariat's dynamics, a change in the balance of forces between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will take place. Only this opens a space for a qualitative leap in class consciousness, paving the way for violent overthrowing of the ruling class and for decisive resolution of class antagonisms. But only if the proletarian movement immediately, practically and consciously sets on the journey towards real human community achieved through the revolution. The revolution not to die, has to authoritatively oppose counter-revolution which will instantly use weaknesses within our class against us.

11. FOR PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP

For more and more proletarians the process of combative dynamics of revolutionary proletariat to violent insurrections and class revolution imposes a conscious choice between Communism and capitalist barbarism: exploitation, crisis, wars, and environmental catastrophe. The clearer this choice gets, the more capable the proletariat is to realise in the revolution its social dictatorship against wage labour, value, exchange, money, state. This means a worldwide dictatorship of human needs against Capital and revolutionary terror against bourgeois forces.

The proletarian dictatorship means abolishment of existing social relations: abolition of wage labour, abolition of useless professions and productions, elimination of exchange relations from all aspects of our lives, abolition of economy and production for profit and subordination of all productive forces to human needs and needs of the world revolution, disappearance of the difference between work and leisure, city and countryside and all other separations, violent destruction of the State and its replacing with organs of proletarian revolutionary self-organisation, all of that which the triumph of the revolution turns into a global human community. Through this historical revolutionary process the proletariat (as last existing class) abolishes itself and thus the whole class society and fully develops worldwide human community.

12. ON REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

The revolutionary organisation grows and gains specific forms directly from class struggle, because the proletariat is historically forced to do so. The revolutionary organisation with its militant activity creates conditions for centralisation of revolutionary elements, which are small and insignificant in times of unfavourable balance of forces, and the most conscious and radical sections of the proletariat. The revolutionary organisation is neither prefiguration of future social organisation nor a rigid eternal structure. It just takes an essential part in the process of historical centralization of revolutionary dynamics which embodies itself as the party of the proletariat, i.e. the communist party. What marks this party off various self-proclaimed vanguards, is that it has no other program than its class as a historical subject, thus as it is a centralization of this program, it is a direction of the whole class revolutionary struggle.

13. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

To deepen, defend and propagate the historical programme of the proletariat for overthrowing ruling class with an insurrection in order to spark revolution abolishing class society. On the basis of lessons from past and present proletarian struggles to clarify the content of the revolutionary transition, the communist revolution. Through propaganda, agitation and active involvement, to highlight, support and spur all tendencies in contemporary struggles, which could aid to the development of revolutionary consciousness and militant spirit in our class, an emergence of radical proletarian associations. To reveal and critically identify obstacles, either ideological or practical, in present-day class struggles that block the way to an emergence of an open class confrontation, i.e. open revolutionary conflict between both classes. To centralise militant proletarians, who try to organise on the basis of the revolutionary programme, and to make an effective combative structure for communist militants. From fertile ground of social antagonisms and class struggle dynamics, to effectively push forward, promote, organize and coordinate an execution of future violent insurrection as a decisive moment in whole upcoming communist revolution.