

# WE ARE NEITHER ISRAELI NOR PALESTINIAN, NEITHER JEWISH NOR MUSLIM...

אוקראינה, רוסיה, ישראל, פלסטין

أوكرانيا ، روسيا ، إسرائيل ، فلسطين



בראו נהפוך מלחמה  
ושלום קפיטליסטים  
למהפכה חברתית  
עולמית

دعونا نحول الحرب  
الرأسمالية والسلام إلى  
الثورة الاجتماعية  
العالمية



★ מלחמת מעמדות ★

★ حرب الطبقة ★

# WE ARE THE PROLETARIAT!

*Comrades,  
The present material is no one's property, it is part of the experience accumulated by a class, which lives and struggles to abolish its own salaried condition and hence all classes and all exploitation.*

*Use then this material, spread it, discuss it, reproduce it, translate it...*

*We address our warmest communist salute, our unconditional support to all proletarians who struggle to affirm our worldwide and autonomous class interests, against capitalism, against its State, against the pseudo-workers' parties and trade-unions, which perpetuate its survival.*

*Let us contribute to the organization of our class as a worldwide force for the abolition of all classes, for the destruction of the world of commodity, for communism, for the human community.*

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★ CLASS WAR'S PRESENTATION ★

HERE WE PRESENT YOU THE TEXT WRITTEN BY INTERNATIONALIST COMMUNIST GROUP [GCI-ICG], that was originally published in its central review *Communism* n. 54 in 2003, during “the Second Intifada” uprising. It is a very important contribution to the deconstruction, denunciation and dismantlement of the bourgeois myth of a national community, supposedly bridging the unbridgeable class conflict between the exploited – the proletariat and the exploiters – the bourgeoisie.

Against this myth, that in the territory of “Israel/Palestine” takes form of either “Jewish homeland” or “Palestinian national liberation”, this text imposes the perspective of proletarian militant subjectivity. It brings forward many examples of class struggle in the territories under the control of either the Fatah-led Palestinian government, and Hamas at the time of writing not yet in government, but ascending and already fulfilling their role of the Islamic social-democracy, or of the Zionist regime. Nowadays, Hamas has become the ruling faction in Gaza and the brutality and intensity of the war, in particular extermination tactics of IDF in Gaza reached the unprecedented levels, but the insistence of communists on revolutionary defeatism without compromise and against all bourgeois falsifications does not change.

Historically, the social-democratic forces, have occasionally adopted the concept of revolutionary defeatism, but applied it so inconsistently – only to wars in the past, wars on the other side of the globe or wars, where none of their bourgeois allies were involved in – that it became only an empty (and manipulative) rhetoric.

Against this, ICG stresses the invariance and the central role of the revolutionary defeatist position in the communist program, the necessity of struggle for defeat of “our own” side in any capitalist war, against the bourgeoisie in “our own” country, the necessity to fraternize with the proletarians in the

“enemy” camp, all this regardless of which side of the inter-bourgeois conflict is considered “the attacker” or “the attacked”, “the oppressor” or “the oppressed”, “the colonizer” or “the colonized”.

To get this point across, ICG references a leaflet “Jewish workers, comrades” produced by the group RKD (*Revolutionäre Kommunisten Deutschlands or Revolutionary Communists of Germany*) and distributed in the height of the biggest capitalist slaughter of proletariat so far, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943. The leaflet is also attached in the bulletin, with comments by ICG as well as brief history of RKD and other revolutionary groups at the time of “WW2”.

Last point we want to make concerns the ICG organization itself. We consider their decades long activity and their contribution to the reappropriation of the historical program of the proletarian class by the community of struggle to be particularly important and very close to our positions. It is also important to make a point, that the historical ICG does not exist anymore. As any militant organization in the history of the movement, despite all its strengths, it was not immune to the internal contradictions. Eventually, couple of years ago these contradictions led to its dissolution as an organization keeping its militant continuity. Several ex-militants (in a literal sense), forming so-called Kilombo collective, keep talking and signing their materials in ICG’s name but, in reality, have completely hijacked the programmatic content of the group in favor of vulgar, idealist and conspiracy-theory prone ideological fantasy. We have to warn our comrades of this falsification.

★ CLASS WAR – APRIL 2024 ★

WE ARE NEITHER ISRAELI NOR PALESTINIAN, NEITHER JEWISH NOR MUSLIM...

★ WE ARE THE PROLETARIAT! ★

*Internationalist Communist Group – April 2003*

THERE IS NOT, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AND THERE WILL NEVER BE CAPITALISM WITHOUT WAR. If we want to prevent wars, we must abolish capitalism. There is no other way to achieve a world without war.

But to bring down capitalism, it is essential that the part of the society that makes up its exploited being, and which manifests itself as the living contradiction to the economic tyranny, should constitute itself as a single revolutionary class against the bourgeoisie, as a single party structuring its strength beyond any religion, ideology or nationality.

Internationalism is the proletarian response to the efforts of capitalist rivals to unite the exploited around the national economy and make them kill each other by lining them up behind their respective flags: nations, regions, national liberation fronts, socialist countries, anti-imperialist fronts, oppressed peoples... The key to overcome the contradictions in which capitalism tries to isolate the proletariat and to divide it by States, lies in the absolute rejection of any recruitment in a national camp. The exploited all over the world have no interests in common with those who exploit them, and nothing in the inter-imperialist contradictions can halt the worsening, at whatever level, of their situation as exploited, nothing in the inter-bourgeois balance of forces can relativize their interest in fighting the capitalist class relentlessly.

To attach the proletariat to patriotic values, the bourgeoisie systematically resorts to ideological tricks supposed to make the national fiction it sells to those it dominates more consistent. Bourgeois academic researchers invent pre-historic origins for the nation, they find its first inhabitants

and quickly transform them into a people with a so-called community of language, culture and religion. Once these roots defined, the historians then transform aspects of class struggle into “liberation” struggles, they brandish local heroes who “died for their country”, they sanctify the sufferings of so-called martyrs and the trick is played: a nation is born. The history of “national constitutions” is full of legends designed to justify national mystification, to build a unity whose sole function is to provide ideological cover for capital constituted as a State, and to enable capitalism to dispose of a docile, domesticated proletariat, accepting its condition in the name of the fictitious union existing between it and those who exploit it.

And in the game of legends, the more nationalist ideologues succeed in presenting their patriotic creation in the guise of a small, oppressed victim (protesting high and strong against harassment imposed by some powerful rival), the more capitalist agents succeed in freezing social contradictions in the legend of national ideology as well as building a powerful national consensus around the so-called oppressed nation. The “oppression of people” is the inescapable gateway used by local capitalists to commit their crimes and make the proletariat fall into the trap of national defense.

In reality, there are neither “oppressed nations” nor “oppressor nations”: there are only capitalist contradictions, veiled by many bourgeois fractions, all striving to overshadow exploitation behind the national fiction.

Like any fiction, the nation nevertheless becomes a very real and material force when it succeeds in getting the whole of civil society, including the exploited, to embrace and defend its foul flag, in a kind of marriage between proletarians and bourgeois – a sordid union that allows the latter to send the former to be slaughtered in the name of defending the fatherland. Patriotic union is undoubtedly the most important materialization of national ideology, and a decisive factor in unleashing capitalist wars.

Whatever the material power of this national fiction, in any case, we must remember that the exploited remains concretely subjected to cops, taxes, repression, “cretinization”, labor, extortion of surplus-value... and this, whether he’s stuck in homeland No.1 or homeland No.2. The proletariat has no homeland. Its interest is to unite its forces across borders, outside the terrain set up by the various bourgeois fractions to wage their capitalist battles. The victory of the communist project carried in its womb by the revolutionary class depends directly on its ability to emerge as an international party, as a stateless and a-national force. This truth, stressed by

revolutionaries since the wage-labor has existed, is more topical than ever, and the difficulty of imposing this perspective is leading to ever more dramatic situations.

What is currently happening in the Middle East is an appalling example of the invariable and putrid unity of capitalism and war, and of the difficulties experienced by the proletariat in rediscovering the inevitably internationalist path of the struggle to abolish the classes. But the violent contradictions inherent in such a situation of generalized war condemn the proletarians on both sides of the conflict to seek paths other than those in which attempts have been made to confine them. These paths lead to a direct struggle against “one’s own” exploiter, to struggle against “one’s own” bourgeoisie, to refuse to shoot at class brothers, to build networks enabling soldiers on both sides to desert, to organize resistance to “one’s own” officers, to “one’s own” State, to refuse all war – in short, to organize revolutionary defeatism.

We would like to emphasize here a few examples in this way and place them in a historical perspective by republishing, at the end of these notes, an internationalist leaflet written in Yiddish and distributed by a number of revolutionary militants in the midst of the Second World War, at the time when the fascist/anti-fascist polarization was seeking to prevent proletarian unity. These revolutionaries refused that anti-fascism and the emphasizing of exclusively fascist crimes would lead to union between Jewish proletarians and Jewish bourgeois. We reprint this leaflet with a few historical notes about its authors.

#### WHETHER ISRAELI OR PALESTINIAN, PATRIOTISM IS A MURDERER

Israel, Palestine. Every day brings us a new batch of news, each more unbearable than the previous one. Before the haggard eyes of a majority of indifferent and almost silent spectators, who are convinced of their powerlessness, the means of “imbecilization” of public opinion create a daily festival of images allowing us to admire almost live the latest performances of “the arts of war”: a house is hit head-on by a helicopter fire, a kid is murdered in his father’s arms, a medic picks up arms and legs in the middle of a pizzeria, a woman mourns her family buried alive under rubble, a combatant agonizes in his still-fresh blood... Day after day, politicians and intellectuals take turns to offer an opinion as well circumstantial as inoperative on the daily killings, the widespread bombings, the arbitrary executions,

the house demolitions, the razing of entire neighborhoods, the mass imprisonments, the snipers, the suicide bombers, the tanks and helicopters omnipresent in the cities. As well as being an admission of powerlessness, these comments made by falsely saddened people serve to familiarize citizens with a society where every aspect of life is progressively militarized and terror reigns everywhere.

To comfort the TV-created idiot, to prevent him from taking action and make sure he goes to work the next day without grumbling, the news is supplemented with reports on peace efforts, on the dispatch of special emissaries, on the passing of resolutions... Nobel Prize winners as well as foreign parliamentarians and European pacifists are also involved at Israeli checkpoints – in short, everyone is comforted by the thought that “authorized” people are dealing with the situation and doing everything they can to resolve it. This undoubtedly enables the citizen to accept watching the same bloody images the next evening without feeling the need to react.

As for the proletarians who might nevertheless ask a few questions, they are tranquilized while being assured of their inability to change the course of events. To force them to remain indifferent to what their class brothers are suffering in the Middle East, they are overwhelmed with explanations that methodically reduce any reflection on this war to a question of rival nations or age-old and inextricable religious conflicts. From both the left and the right, we can hear that the only solution is the creation of a Palestinian State that would coexist peacefully alongside its neighbor, the State of Israel. The maximum of what the democratic thinking can do logically stops at the design of new borders, the organization of a better police and the planning of the conditions of exploitation that will result from the new balance of power between States.

Palestinian State, Israeli nation, Jewish and Muslim religions... it is in this circle of fire that the dominant ideology tries to confine any attempt to grasp the conflict, inevitably pushing – and this is in the interest of the bourgeoisie – for a polarization, a demarcation between those who defend “the Israelis” and those who defend “the Palestinians”.

There is never any reference to the existence of opposing social interests, to belonging to different social classes. No mention is ever made of the fact that between a senior politician and a soldier, between a weapon-monger and an unemployed man, between a Palestinian banker and a stone-throwing kid from Gaza, for example, there is an antagonism as deep as that between the predator and his prey. For the media, social class is a



world that simply doesn't exist. Journalists willfully ignore everything that separates the young Israeli reservist thrown at the front from the career general who sent him there. It doesn't matter if the former is unemployed and the latter a major shareholder: for the defenders of order, it's all about instilling in the heads of all those who listen to them that they are first and foremost Israelis, Jews. Just as the young students who, strapped with explosives, blow themselves up on a bus are associated as Palestinians, as Muslims, with the hidden mullahs who have convinced them that martyrdom is a "gift from Allah" and the shortest route to paradise.

The powerful reality of democracy constantly calls upon ideology and methodically penetrates social space right down to its furthest corners, assimilating a proletarian to "his" State at every level, drowning him in a false national community and dissolving him into the people. The notion of the Palestinian people, like that of the Israeli people, stifles all class contradiction. It materializes the equality of the world of the commodity, a world in which there are no rich or poor, bankers or refugees, landowners or farm workers, but only the common interest of defending the same State.

The power of the bourgeoisie could be precisely measured, in addition to its claim to deny its proletarian adversary, by its ability to conceal its own existence as a class. That's why, and in a very complementary way, the dominant ideology avoids to publish the agreements made between particular bourgeois when they are supposed to be waging war against each other. So, when it comes to the Middle East, there's no reason to disturb the solidity of the scenario based on "irreconcilable national enemies". There's no question of showing the bourgeois backstage of this imposture, a backstage made of great commercial, financial and economic embraces between "Jews" and "Muslims" supposedly belonging to opposing camps. The flow of information almost systematically removes anything that might in any way point to the existence of these common interests linking Israeli and Palestinian capitalists, regardless of their nationality.

For example, when the Palestinian Authority settled in Gaza, journalists were careful not to disturb the background noise of the news and made no mention whatsoever of the major monopoly agreements immediately signed by the Palestinian leadership with Israeli companies. Not a word was said about the gigantic transactions made with Israeli companies, which enabled a whole series of high-ranking members of the Palestinian executive to enrich themselves extremely rapidly. Palestinian personalities who (so that rentability is preserved) were quick to place their dividends

in bank accounts... in the State of Israel. The newspapers said very little about this, because it didn't fit with the dominant ideology. Whether Israeli or Palestinian, reality shows that capitalists have no other homeland than that of profit, and that they have no problem, on whatever side of the border, exploiting their compatriots while signing agreements with each other. But this observation shifts the information into the realm of class struggle, and reveals the essential function played by patriotism in capitalist social organization: to blur the outlines of social antagonism. This statement is unlikely to come out of the mouths of those watchdogs of the social order that most journalists are.

In view of the chaotic situation prevailing in this region, and the impressive ideological barrage being set up to maintain this situation, we would like to point out that only the proletariat's return to its class terrain can put an end to war (in the Middle East and elsewhere), and that this process necessarily involves a clear and definitive break with the national unions that each State is striving to forge. The breaks made by the proletariat in Palestine, and the determination with which it continues to confront bourgeois terrorism, are an important step in this direction.

#### BREAKING WITH SOCIAL PEACE IN PALESTINE AND RESISTING NATIONALIST AND RELIGIOUS RECUPERATION

The continuity of the struggle against all States waged for years by the proletariat in Palestine is exemplary. It is rooted in the intolerable situation imposed on them. Parked for the most part in concentration camps such as the one in Gaza, the proletarians have no other existence than that of an industrial reserve army, an inexhaustible source of labor force wherein the Palestinian and Israeli bourgeoisie come and draw from time to time, according to their needs. This concentration of unemployed proletarians, ready to accept any job because of the difficulty of surviving in the camps, also enables the bourgeoisie on both sides of the border to maintain general pressure on wages. This reality gives the Israeli army a dual role: as an army of occupation, of course, but also as a genuine regional police force guaranteeing that the local bourgeoisie maintains the prevailing conditions of exploitation.

It is because it is faced with these extreme conditions of exploitation, it is faced with this particularly violent repression (necessary to maintain these conditions), that the proletariat in Palestine has been relentlessly

rising up. First and foremost, against the Israeli army, the enemy that confronts it directly, the enemy that destroys homes, humiliates proletarians and murders on a daily basis, but also against the Palestinian State and police, against all forces opposed to its revolt.

In this short text, whose purpose is to emphasize a few actions in the perspective of an internationalist and defeatist revolutionary response to the war, we won't go into the history of the many struggles that have marked proletarian combativity in Palestine, particularly since the establishment of an official Palestinian State. Beyond the ongoing resistance to attacks by Israeli cops and soldiers, let's just briefly mention the violent clashes with Palestinian police, prison attacks, the release of prisoners denounced as terrorists by both the Israeli and Palestinian States, attacks on police stations, widespread uprisings in various areas, etc., all examples of a practice that refuses to take borders, flags or the interests of the local nation into account.

The latest wave of uprisings in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and elsewhere, triggered just as the State of Israel and the PLO had agreed to set up the new Palestinian State, is particularly significant. It affirms an enormous break with the social pacification undertaken by the Palestinian State, its leaders and its torturers of the police. Since the international decision to formalize the existence of the local Palestinian State, the successive intifadas<sup>1</sup> in the so-called occupied territories have shown just how little the proletariat in the region is willing to accept the "new" reality that the ruling class intends to impose on it.

The proletarians crammed into the Gaza Strip saw the new Palestinian State introducing a whole series of measures favoring wealthy merchants, bankers and other "three-star" PLO, who were suddenly able to enrich themselves even faster. With support for representatives of wealthy clans, ministries led by large landowners, and the emergence of a caste of well-housed, well-paid Palestinian civil servants driving new cars... what happened in Palestine was the same what happened in Eastern Europe when the wall has fallen: the bourgeoisie became more visible and misery became more glaring. According to capitalist logic, the money from the subsidies was to be used to "stimulate private initiative and investment", which in practice meant favoring Palestinian entrepreneurs (such as the *mu-wataneen*, wealthy families of Gazan descent and all those who had

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<sup>1</sup> "Intifada" means to rise up in Arabic.

managed to accumulate capital during the occupation) and financially encouraging the establishment of Palestinian businessmen from the diaspora wishing to invest in concert with other foreign capitalists. Similarly, international donations and construction loans have been used mainly to build high-rise towers in the center of Gaza, where an apartment costs between \$45,000 and \$60,000, much less than the luxury apartments that house the top officials of the Palestinian Authority<sup>2</sup>.

So, for the refugees, workers and unemployed of the West Bank and Gaza, there's little reason to celebrate the new Palestinian State. As they have bitterly observed, the space available for them is determined not only by the existence of Israeli electric fences protecting the settlers, but also by the limits imposed by the needs for development of Palestinian capitalists. This is how a journalist [Amira Hass in *Drinking the Sea at Gaza*] describes the limited space available to refugees in Gaza: "Even were the Palestinian Authority to decide to keep all the refugees in the Gaza Strip and build new towns from the ground up, the Jewish settlements – which occupy 20 percent of the land – would still pose a problem. And while al-Shatti camp, for example, could have expanded to the north, the Authority chose to use that precious government land to build a luxury hotel." What could be more expressive than this space left to the refugees, to illustrate how the proletariat does not enter into any capitalist expansion plans, be they Israeli or Palestinian? "Why can't we use the beach?" asked a Palestinian refugee in 1996. "It's the only place where you can get out, forget a little. They're putting up a hotel over here and an officers' club over there, and smack in the middle is somewhere for Arafat. The north and the south, that's all that's left, and you know what's there? The settlements." The proletarians who thought they were fighting for a piece of land behind the flags of "Palestinian national liberation" are in for a bitter disappointment: the only homeland granted to them by the new Palestinian State lies between the electric wires of Jewish settlements and the concrete of Palestinian luxury hotels.

Another example of the Palestinian State's concern for its proletarian "compatriots" is the silence it showed, during the negotiation of the peace agreements, on the question of the 11,000 proletarians from Palestine imprisoned by the State of Israel. Initially, the prisoners' issue was simply "forgotten". Following a series of protests, this point was noted in the 1994

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<sup>2</sup> It's in front of Gaza's renovated city center that journalists and delegations of diplomats in ecstasy come to applaud the region's dynamism. And indeed, this is where the international donations have gone, where the institutions and senior officials are concentrated.

Cairo agreement, but nothing was done to speed up a solution-of the issue. "As head of the prisoners' committee Abed al-Razeq continues paying weekly visits to his comrades in prison. 'I have no valid explanation to give them as to why they are still being held. The prisoners feel as if their commanders abandoned them on the battlefield.' (...) 'The prisoners can't believe that Palestinian cabinet ministers are paying them visits in Israeli jails.' (...)"

In practice for the proletariat, the establishment of a new national State clearly meant a deterioration in their already miserable living conditions. By 1996, unemployment had risen by 8.2% in six months, to 39.2%. Whereas in 1995, Gazans lucky enough to have a job in the Strip saw their wages fall by 9.6%, and those working in Israel by 16%. Meanwhile, the capitalist class grew richer on the basis of agreements with various Israeli companies.

But it wasn't just the merchants who were boosted by the Oslo Accords; the Palestinian State also focused on developing its police force. It's quite normal that the hope of capitalist commercial expansion should go hand in hand with intensified repression.

Back in 1994, we reported that the Palestinian police had just been set up and was already imprisoning and torturing people; since then, the situation has only worsened. As early as February 1995, in order to keep his promise to Rabin to fight terrorism, Arafat set up the Supreme Military Court for State Security, which undertook a series of summary trials during the nights. In 1996, Palestinian security forces no longer hesitated to execute "activists", and by 1997, some twenty people had already been killed in the jails of the new Palestinian State.

The 1994 Cairo agreements between the States of Israel and Palestine provided for the deployment of a 9,000-strong force (including 7,000 members of the Palestine Liberation Army) to Gaza and Jericho. Barely two years later, the Palestinian police force numbered 21,000, and these figures have continued to rise ever since. The Palestinian police quickly became the main employer and source of income in the Gaza Strip. The General Security, Intelligence and Civil Defense forces provided for in the agreements were gradually joined by Preventive Security (which, among other things, controls the passage of Palestinians into Israel, a job previously performed only by Israeli cops), Military Intelligence, the Presidential Guard (Force 17 and Force 87 for "special missions") and the Border Patrol. Each security branch maintains its own jails (24 in the Gaza Strip

alone in 1996), its own interrogators and its own esprit de corps. Any resident of Gaza can be arrested several times by the different branches of Security. Hamas dissidents were also offered entry into the police force to form a “morality department” responsible for combating prostitution, alcohol consumption, etc.; some of them immediately obtained police officer ranks and a salary. In short, the proletarians were quick to point out that in Gaza, there was one cop for every fifty inhabitants.

The Israeli army, for its part, obviously had nothing to say about this “violation” of the Cairo agreement. They sincerely hoped that the Palestinian police, trained in part by them, would be able to successfully take over their repressive task. A typical example of this happy collaboration between police forces was the handing over to the Palestinian cops of the task of filtering the entry of Palestinian workers into Israel at the famous Erez checkpoint.

“Palestinian police were assigned the job of sifting the workers approaching the checkpoint at a series of roadblocks placed along the way to the border. Israeli soldiers stationed at the checkpoint had admitted how hard it was for them to withstand the pleas of permitless workers trying to get through. The logistical conclusion was not to increase the number of workers allowed across the border but instead to spare Israeli soldiers the painful job of weeding out permitless Gazans by leaving it to the Palestinian police force. (...) Soon the workers in Rafah were cracking bitter jokes about the ‘seven’ Palestinian stations they had to pass before reaching the Israeli checkpoint and the ‘foreigners’ who were posted at them.”

As in all police forces in the world, the Israeli police knew perfectly well that a local police force (“community policing” according to the fashionable euphemism imposed on us) would be far more credible and effective than an army of occupation, than a “foreign” cop. But the refusal to accept social peace, as demonstrated by the successive Intifadas, has partially ruined the love story between the Palestinian and Israeli police forces<sup>3</sup>. Completely overwhelmed, unable to maintain order, the Palestinian State had no choice but to let its “master”, its benchmark for repression, return. The Israeli army intervened once again, punctually taking up positions in so-

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<sup>3</sup> We say “partially ruined” because love stories between States never really end when it comes to repressing the proletariat. For example, the war between the States of Israel and Palestine does not in any way prevent them from cooperating, and after September 11, the Palestinian State had no qualms about buying weapons from Israel for use in suppressing the groups who had voiced their approval of the attacks in New York. For its part, the State of Israel had no hesitation in arming the Palestinian State. When it comes to repressing the proletariat the bourgeois State openly shows its supranational face.

called autonomous towns, arresting and/or assassinating militants, and suppressing any expression of proletarian anger.

The Palestinian State, lacking credibility after so many years of policing, imprisonment and torture, had no other choice but to play the card of the “opposition to Israel” once again. Wealthy merchants and Palestinian politicians from abroad, who barely had time to build a semblance of posh suburbs in Gaza, were quick to blame the State of Israel for breaking agreements and denounced a new aggression. Then, to make sure that as capitalists “less-powerful-than-their-Israeli-rivals”, they wouldn’t be lumped together with the “Zionist enemy”, they sent their cops and soldiers to mingle with the angry proletarian youth and fire a few bullets at Israeli tanks, thus preparing the alibi for a new and sordid national union.

Yet anti-Israeli rhetoric can only barely protect the PLO and the leadership of the Palestinian State from the hatred of those they have repressed. Yasser Arafat shook hands with too many Israeli politicians, he collaborated in setting up a local police force with his so-called enemy, he allowed repression and torture, he imprisoned those whom the State of Israel asked to be imprisoned, he handed over Palestinian prisoners to the State of Israel, and so on.

Of course, the Palestinian State continues to fully play the “Israeli enemy” card, in order to recompose internal national unity and conceal the repressive role it has been playing in tandem with the Israeli State for years – it has no alternative – but this is not enough, and the patriotic union called for by the PLO, even if it assumes its disorganizing function among those fighting, remains quite fragile towards the process of autonomy to which a good part of the proletariat in Palestine seems ready.

One of the perverse consequences of undermining the credibility of the PLO and Yasser Arafat is, of course, that other nationalist and religious groups, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, are able to strengthen themselves by diverting the fighting spirit expressed in the “occupied territories” into their own nets. These groups benefit enormously from the desperate situation in which the Palestinian proletarians find themselves, crushed by the enormous Israeli war machine and confronted almost daily with the loss of a loved one, a parent, a neighbor. The whole science of Islamist groups consists in transforming the proletariat’s hatred for the war being waged against it (and therefore also for its direct enemy, those who shoot at it) into a murderous repugnance “towards the Jews” per se. Just as in France in 1940-45, the *Francs-Tireurs et Partisans* and the “Communist” Party

sought to reduce the margins of the anti-capitalist struggle to the famous patriotic slogan *A chacun son boche!* ["To each his Hun!"], so today groups like Hamas and others stimulate the despair of those who don't have much to lose, and turn their anger on "the Jews", "the infidels", "the atheists". The function of these Palestinian gangs, whether nationalist and/or religious, is to reduce the violent rejection of the social conditions imposed on proletarians in Palestine to a mere war – nation against nation, and to transform unwilling victims of the capitalist war into convinced murderers of the "enemies of the nation".

However, the success of those who advocate the martyrology is relative. More than one relative of a young proletarian sent to martyrdom has turned against his emissary. In a program shot by Israeli television with families of Palestinian militants imprisoned or killed in suicide bombings, several fathers and mothers exclaimed: "May the mullahs who sent my son to martyrdom go themselves!" This revolt against the use of proletarians as cannon fodder is certainly much more widespread than official propaganda would make us believe. On the other hand, not all the fighting spirit in Palestine has been co-opted by these nationalist or religious structures; militant groups continue to structure themselves autonomously, escaping the all-too-simple nationalist and anti-Jewish recuperations. In fact, there is a general fighting spirit among the proletariat, which regularly expresses a desire for autonomy, both against the Palestinian Authority and Islamist groups. For example, as recently as October 2002, when his brother was murdered by Palestinian riot police during a demonstration against Arafat, a proletarian wanted to avenge the crime and executed the head of this repressive unit. The Palestinian cops set off in search of him, but they were unable to capture him for the simple reason that the inhabitants of the neighborhood where he lived immediately intervened to prevent his arrest. They hid him, defended him by all possible means, including attacking police cars. The Palestinian Authority immediately sought to attribute these events to Hamas, but the local residents explicitly denied this accusation. This situation is far from exceptional. There are more and more similar situations, where the need to act in a way that sets them apart from all its enemies, effectively pushes the proletariat to rely on their own strength alone.

It's in the multiplication of these actions of resistance, and in the resulting extension of the political autonomy, where we can undoubtedly see the possibility of the development of the anti-capitalist (and therefore internationalist) response of the proletariat to the atrocious conditions to which it



is subjected. A response based on class differentiation rather than national differentiation, a response that takes into account the total opposition that exists even in the Israeli camp between soldiers and officers, workers and bosses, proletarians and bourgeois, a response that stimulates and encourages existing oppositions, and that pushes Israeli proletarians in uniform to identify with the social struggle waged by their brothers and sisters in Palestine, rather than in the murderous orders of their officers. Finally, a response that excludes from its own ranks the false friends of the proletariat, all those who seek to recuperate class hatred and transform it into a national or religious struggle, for a new State, a new capitalist space more suited to their needs.

It's clear that the road to internationalism in Palestine today is through an immediate response to the imposed humiliations and tortures. It's not a question of waiting blissfully for internationalist solidarity to arise spontaneously from the brains of the Israeli soldiers who are murdering them. It is precisely the direct action taken by the proletarians of Palestine against the Israeli soldiers who shoot at them, who keep them locked up in camps and who torture them that constitutes the most powerful incentive for the soldiers on the other side to break with the national union and turn against their officers.

This direct action by the proletariat undoubtedly still takes all sorts of forms today, more or less confused, more or less targeted. The settlers and the Israeli army are certainly the primary targets of those who resist the military terror, but it is certain that the state of exasperation of the proletariat in the camps, confronted with the systematic murder of its children or parents, exacerbates its desire to hit the enemy to such an extent that it sometimes makes the intended target, or even the method used, more approximate<sup>4</sup>.

Nevertheless, we wish to emphasize the hypocrisy and cynicism of equating, on the one hand, a fringe group of proletarians who try to resist and throw their despair into more or less suicidal action, and on the other, the class enemy in the form of these determined killers, over-trained and perfectly fed, who do not hesitate to shoot children who have taken refuge in their father's arms, to liquidate the wounded carried in ambulances, to

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<sup>4</sup> Of course, we're not referring here to the Islamist gangs we've just denounced, who make cold-blooded use of the despair prevailing in the camps to turn the poor buggers they anaesthetize with their religious opium into cannon fodder, into "killers of Jews or atheists".

bury alive inhabitants who have refused to abandon their homes, and to fire missiles at buildings full of proletarians.

How much cynicism does the international bourgeoisie need to try and pass off as “terrorist” the few reactions of the proletariat in the camps, and as “anti-terrorist” the actions of those soldiers who demolish houses, imprison and torture, or patently shell the populations of the refugee camps, as was recently the case in Rafah and Khan Younis, the poorest areas of all the Palestinian territories? How does this compare with the terror these soldiers unleash when they target rooftop water tanks, when they bang their rifle butts on the doors of the houses to terrorize children, when they confiscate identity papers on the slightest pretext, and when they beat prisoners with thick electric cables? How can this be compared with the situation in the camps, where the simple need of a proletarian to move from one town to another, from one village to another, is subjected to endless vexations? Not to mention the daily humiliations: the border guard who throws a small merchant’s tomato stall on the ground, the soldiers who come to empty their garbage in inhabited neighborhoods, the civil servants who cut off the power to entire neighborhoods for one unpaid bill or another ... Israeli warmongers know very well that a war is won by discouraging the adversary, all the more so if the latter manifests himself more on the social terrain than the national one. This is why the army deliberately murders such a large number of civilians, children, workers... crimes that they pretend to mourn as blunders. A study by the Israeli-Palestinian association “Physicians for Human Rights” (PHR) pointed out that during the five years of the first Intifada, a child under the age of six was shot in the head every two weeks. And recently, an Israeli army sniper told a journalist that orders were to shoot dangerous-looking children over the age of twelve. Can we seriously still talk about a blunder?

What hypocrisy to invoke “terrorism” when discrediting the rare proletarian bullets which, in response to this terror, sometimes hit their target! What a sinister comedy it is to speak of “the fight against terrorism” when referring to the actions of Israeli settlers, organized as real death squads, who do not hesitate to shoot down unarmed proletarians, torture and murder their prisoners, all under the benevolent eye and with the blessing of the army!

By disobeying “their own” bourgeoisie, by refusing the social peace and living conditions imposed on them, by acting autonomously, the proletarians in Palestine are paving the way for revolutionary defeatism. By their

action, they are practically encouraging proletarians in Israel to disobey their leaders too, the first step towards a community of struggle that transcends national divisions and affirms the struggle against the bourgeoisies on both sides, against the armies on both sides, against capitalists everywhere.

#### BREACHES IN THE NATIONAL UNION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The discrediting of the official Palestinian leaders, the rejection of social peace in Palestine itself and the combativeness against the Israeli gendarme do not, unfortunately, change the particularly horrific situation of the proletariat in the occupied territories. Partly, of course, because of the policy pursued by the Palestinian leadership, as we have seen above, but also and mainly, of course, because of the war waged by the State of Israel. Since the outbreak of a new Intifada in Palestine in September 2000, massacres have been taking place in the area on an almost daily basis, facilitated of course by the enormous military balance of power in favor of the Israeli army, which is reflected in the cold tally of deaths on both sides of the border: since September 2000, there have been approximately 1,800 deaths on the Palestinian side and 600 on the Israeli side.

This military power is rooted in the unwavering support the State of Israel receives from the Western camp, and particularly from the United States, a support which directly concerns the primary function attributed to it, namely the general repression of the proletariat, not only in Palestine and Israel, but throughout this region known for its social unrest. The gendarme function attributed to the State of Israel, de facto responsible for the repression of any social movement in the area, enables both the local and international bourgeoisie to maintain control over the Middle East's oil resources, which are vital resources for international industry<sup>5</sup>. Translated into financial terms, the figures of Western support reflect the imperialist stakes concentrated in the region. Since 1984, official annual aid from the US bourgeoisie alone to the Israeli State has amounted to \$3 billion (40% in economic support and 60% in military support). If we add to this sum a further \$2 billion in the so-called indirect aid (various special military

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<sup>5</sup> 99% of the support given by the North American bourgeoisie to the State of Israel came after 1967, i.e. after Israel had proved itself as a regional power by winning the Six-Day War. Today, this support is justified by the "historic duty to defend Israel" and refers explicitly to "the right of the Jews to have a land". But the North American government is careful not to explain why Israel did not receive the same support between 1948 and 1967, at a time when it was far more vulnerable. The ways of hypocrisy are endless.

programs, military support from the defense budget, guarantees not required, etc.), we arrive at an approximate annual sum of \$5 billion, which constitutes something like a third of the US foreign aid budget<sup>6</sup>.

But, apart from direct Western military support, what is the basis of this balance of power in favor of the State of Israel? As in any war, it is built primarily on the power of national unity, a unity that extends far beyond the borders of the official State, and which, fueled by international anti-terrorism campaigns, whispers that "Israel has simply the right to defend itself against terrorism", a right recognized by the Palestinian State as well. The fight "against terrorism" is the gateway to repression, a genuine international license to kill given by all the fractions that permanently support the repression carried out by the State of Israel, most notably the USA and Europe.

International support for the repressive role played by the State of Israel in the region obviously makes this national union paramount, a union particularly organized around the army: omnipresent militarization, extremely long and promoted military service, justification of the supposedly protective role of *Tsahal*, construction of prejudices favorable to soldiers, militarized economy, militarized population, etc.

This hyper-militarized situation is unfortunately little questioned by the proletarians in Israel, despite the development that the struggle in Palestine has experienced and is still experiencing. Indeed, the repeated uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza have unfortunately not prevented proletarians in Israel from maintaining a guilty indifference to the massacres carried out by the Israeli army, when they have not simply aligned themselves behind the plans put in place by the Israeli bourgeoisie to crush the repeated intifadas. It has to be said that, for the most part, the proletarians in Israel have merely reproduced the ideology of their class enemy, which, in the context of the social confrontations taking place in Palestine, has particularly serious consequences for their class brothers.

The justifications for the actions carried out by the Israeli army are, of course, based on a variety of ideologies, depending on the fractions that

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<sup>6</sup> "Israel usually receives roughly one third of the entire foreign aid budget, despite the fact that Israel comprises less than .001 of the world's population... In other words, Israel, a country of approximately 6 million people, is currently receiving more U.S. aid than all of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean combined when you take out Egypt and Colombia." Most of this information and figures are taken from "U.S. Aid: The Lifeblood of Occupation", Matt Bowles in *Left Turn* #4, March-April 2002. [see full article here: <https://www.wrmea.org/congress-u.s.-aid-to-israel/us-aid-the-lifeblood-of-occupation.html>]

express them: rabbis bless the weapons that murder Palestinians in the name of “the fight against evil”, while secularists – led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Shimon Peres – stigmatize “the fight against terrorism”. But they all appeal to the “motherland”, in fact the “mother-army”, an army that is no longer even called an “army”, but carries around its own little name – *Tsahal* – as if to differentiate itself from the others, as if to signify the protective and benevolent character of its killers.

Furthermore, no matter how different the explanations for this war of destruction waged by the Israeli State may be, they are all cemented in a kind of mystical claim of past sufferings of the “Jewish people” as an indisputable guarantee for present action. As everywhere else, but even more so here, the State imposes the profound justification for its existence in a mixture of ideology and religion, preventing any challenge to the official version of the reasons behind its actions. “The Holocaust is the new State religion in Israel”, declared a Jewish Israeli actress to explain the difficulty of voicing any criticism of the State. And indeed, like the justifications given for most of the wars waged by the Western camp in recent decades, the State of Israel legitimizes the terror that the army is currently sowing in its wake by referring to the chasm that would separate its own crimes from the atrocities committed against the Jewish proletariat by the defeated camp – the German State, in the so-called Second World War. These sordid comparisons on the scale of capitalist horrors, apart from what they obscure<sup>7</sup>, are the cement of a huge national consensus in which any challenge to local State terrorism comes up against the extraordinary dogma that no suffering inflicted on anyone will ever equal the persecution suffered by the Jewish people under Nazism. A Tel Aviv academic and activist against Israel’s war recently denounced the cynicism behind this implacable reasoning, in what he described as “The Auschwitz Logic”:

“So this is the Auschwitz logic in a nutshell. Ramallah is not Auschwitz. Israel is not the Third Reich. We have no death-camps and we haven’t

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<sup>7</sup> At the end of a war, the victors not only impose their economic and political conditions on the vanquished, they also dictate the ideological framework within which their victory must henceforth be justified and history “thought”. Thus, the victors of 1940-45 did not hesitate to reframe their conquests in the imperialist war as a great “anti-fascist” battle waged to liberate the world from Nazi anti-Semitism and concentration camps. To get this version across, it was obviously necessary to set aside the aspects that ran counter to this truth: the many alliances made with the Nazis before the war (including the Hitler-Stalin pact), the refusal of “anti-fascist” States to take in the Jews that Germany wanted to get rid of, the existence of concentration camps in the USA, England and France, Winston Churchill’s support for the Mussolini massacres in Abyssinia, the open collaboration of Western States in the deportations of Jews in Germany, and so on.

massacred one third of the Palestinian population in gas chambers. Therefore, everything we do is quite all right. We may fill the occupied territories with tear gas and blood, we may kill and injure and torture and blackmail and dispossess, we may surround millions by electric fences and tanks in tiny enclaves, we may hold them under siege and daily bombing, we may make pregnant women walk to hospitals, and we shoot ambulances too, don't we. But as long as we fall even an inch short of the atrocities of Nazi Germany, it's all fine and good, and don't you dare make the comparison.

People sometimes say that the Better is the greatest foe of the Good. Israel is now demonstrating how the Greater Evil is Evil's best friend.

And many thanks to Adolf Hitler, for setting such insurmountable standards."<sup>8</sup>

These notes do not explicitly take the proletariat's point of view, yet they have earned their author a series of threats and intimidations. This testifies to the iron logic our class faces in dealing with the State of Israel whenever the slightest criticism is made. Attacking the religion of the Holocaust in Israel is worse than questioning the dogma that justifies democracy in Western Europe. When we see, for example in the West, how any reaction that even tries to get away from parliamentarianism is dismissed as "philo-fascist"<sup>9</sup>, we can imagine the terror that any criticism of the local State religion must represent for a proletarian in Israel, which obviously doesn't excuse the lack of practical solidarity with his brother in Palestine.

And what about those criticizing the military and all those who seek to resist widespread military recruitment? Conscientious objection, particularly in wartime, is an offence akin to high treason<sup>10</sup>. Even a pacifist

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<sup>8</sup> Excerpt from "Letter from Israel" by Ran HaCohen, whose reactions can be read in English on his website (<http://www.antiwar.com/hacohen/>). "The Auschwitz Logic" was written in March 2002, to mark the outcry provoked by Portuguese writer José Saramago's daring comparison of the Nazi camps and the situation in the occupied territories, when he visited Ramallah as part of a delegation of the "International Parliament of Writers" (IPW). [see full article here: <https://original.antiwar.com/hacohen/2002/04/01/the-auschwitz-logic/>]

<sup>9</sup> Just take a look at the crude way how the last wave of abstention in France [in 2002] was disqualified: real figures concealed, non-voters assimilated to Nazis, ideological hunting for abstentionists... Accused of being enemies of the Fatherland, the Republic and Democracy, all non-voters were forced to make a mea culpa and publicly pledge to vote in the second round. Democratic Inquisition exists, and abstentionists have encountered it!

<sup>10</sup> The nephew of former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself has registered as a conscientious objector, publicly stating his refusal to serve in the occupied territories. His kinship with Netanyahu allowed a little more publicity to be given to his case, but this did not prevent the Israeli military from sending him to prison for several months.

approach takes on a different dimension. Handing out a mere leaflet calling for an end to the war or opposing the development of the colonies means risking one's life in front of *Kach* militants or settlers.

The national union is therefore very powerful in Israel and, as we have pointed out, the proletariat is practically dissolved. This makes it all the more interesting to note the few ruptures in the local social order that emerged in recent times, ruptures that started from Israeli soldiers and seem to be spreading to other sectors.

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002, 53 officers and reserve soldiers of the Israeli army publicly announced their refusal to “take part in the war for the peace of the settlements. We will not continue to fight beyond the green line [the occupied territories] in order to rule, expel, destroy blockade, assassinate, starve and humiliate an entire people”. The appeal was published in the Israeli daily Haaretz.

This is not the first such reaction, since as long ago as August 2001, 62 students made known their decision not to respond to a possible dispatch to the territories, for political reasons. But this reaction, published in an Israeli newspaper in the form of an advertisement and signed directly by serving soldiers, has brought to light a reality that is usually carefully concealed.

Like the 53 signatories mentioned above, more than 400 Israeli reservists and soldiers have, since the start of the new Intifada (September 2000) [this article dates from March 2003], made public their refusal to fight in the “occupied territories”, and some 40 of them have been sent to prison for it. Yair Hilu, 18, was sentenced to military prison for refusing to do his military service “in this violent entity that is the army”, in his own words. The Israeli State obviously doesn't promote this data very much (nor does the Palestinian State, for that matter). It is therefore difficult to know the exact number of proletarians who have refused to fight, but it is estimated – on the basis of the army's own estimates – that for every person who has made public his refusal to serve the State, 8 or 9 other soldiers express the same position, without daring to confront their superiors directly. Already during the first Intifada (1987-1991), more than 2,500 soldiers clearly refused to go to the West Bank and Gaza, which would mean, on the basis of calculations made earlier, that around 20,000 persons refused to go and confront State repression in one way or another.

The Israeli army relativizes this reality and, despite the testimonies and the growing number of statements in this regard, constantly repeats that “morale is good” and that the “soldiers are motivated”. Yet the State’s reactions leave no room for doubt as for the fear that refusal to obey will spread. An obvious sign of this is the way how the Israeli military authorities avoid systematically throwing refractory soldiers in prison, so as not to create too much of a stir around refusal to serve. On the other hand, because they assert a more general refusal of the system, those who resist the State too ostensibly are entitled to particularly humiliating treatment designed to serve as an example and discourage other holdouts. Another sign is the ban on all foreign journalists not working for the Israeli army’s information service to report on any subject whatsoever. This decision was taken after several conscripts, interviewed directly on the battlefields, had expressed their dismay and lack of understanding of the aims of this war, in front of the cameras. But the fear of social disobedience on the part of the proletariat took on an even more obvious form with the adoption, on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2002, of the austerity plan presented by Sharon, which provides for a reduction in allowances for families whose children have not completed military service. The unconditional national unity around the war being waged by the State of Israel is clearly at stake in these particularly targeted measures.

The aim is to prevent support for those denounced as “saboteurs of the nation’s morale”. For this is the problem facing the Israeli bourgeoisie today: how to prevent the questions posed by proletarians in uniform from being transformed into a social and revolutionary response by the proletariat as a whole? For however weak the scattered reactions of proletarians in Israel to the war may still be, they contain the seeds of a social polarization that could eventually transform the war between the Israeli and Palestinian States into a class confrontation; a confrontation between, on the one hand, the bourgeois defenders of the nation and capitalism and, on the other, a social class becoming aware that the defense of the nation is merely a constraint and an extension of the interests of those who exploit us.

To illustrate these seeds of social polarization, we need look no further than the first appeal by 53 Israeli soldiers to stop fighting “in the occupied territories”, and the reactions it provoked. If we simply have a look at the text, we’ll see that it contains many weaknesses: the signatories justify the sacrifices made in the past for the State of Israel, they take the State’s security as their reference, they regret the deterioration of the IDF’s “human”



image (sic!) and claim to continue to serve it. But what's the most interesting is not so much what they say but the act itself. The fact that, in the context of a national union as compact as the one prevailing in Israel, soldiers dare to refuse the instructions of their superiors and thus put themselves so openly at odds with the interests of their bourgeoisie (with all what this also implies in terms of social repression, insults, contempt and isolation on the part of the majority of citizens) lends far greater weight to this counter-current position. This is not an anti-militarist reaction in a context of social peace, or in the context of the "permissiveness" of parliamentary democracy, but a rupture with one of the most nationally cohesive States in the world, a State that plays a decisive policing role in the region. Refusing to fight for *Tsahal*, while denouncing the suffering inflicted on the proletarians of Palestine on whom they're supposed to be firing, is tantamount to directly confronting all this political coherence drawn from the mythology of the martyred people and armed with the ideology of international anti-fascism, i.e. the cement of the victorious and dominant States since the Second World War. It's an unusual confrontation.

That's why this appeal immediately saw its authors (and those who supported them) branded as "revisionists", "traitors", "self-hating Jews", and even "anti-Semites". The newspaper that published the manifesto was also denounced, and many intellectuals immediately distanced themselves from it. To counter the defeatist effects of this appeal and the enthusiasm it aroused among many proletarians, who finally saw written very clearly what many already thought but did not dare to formulate, the State immediately reacted with its inherent terrorism. The Minister of Education, Limor Livnat, called for 200 academics, who supported these soldiers refusing to serve in the Palestinian territories, to be indicted. The bourgeois press and religious have called for support for the soldiers' morale, as in the daily *Yediot Aharonot*, which on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002 published letters from children in religious public schools calling on the soldiers to "kill as many Arabs as possible", to "shoot Palestinians with F-16s", etc. Similarly, the Israeli parliament is considering draft legislation that would punish with five years' imprisonment "the expression of support for a terrorist organization" (and thus condemn any contact with a Palestinian organization whatsoever).

But in one way or another, and even if it's too early to speak of a widespread movement, if this short text has generated so many reactions from the State, it's because it reveals the breaches which tend to form in national unity. Since the publication of this text in January 2002, the number

of signatories has grown. At the time this text was written, there were 1,100 signatories, including more than 250 who ended up in prison. But beyond this initiative, other information speaks of more than one thousand Israeli proletarians refusing in one way or another to perform military service, either as draftees, reservists or even officers. They are now known as refuseniks, and according to various associations, with all due caution when quoting figures, their support within society is now said to be as high as 25%.

Other public initiatives similar to that of the 53 signatories also took place. For example, a letter from Sergio Yahni, co-director of the “Alternative Information Center”<sup>11</sup>, sent on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2002 to Defense Minister Ben Eliezer, also met with some response. In a more profound contradiction to the State, Yahni asserted his refusal not only to fight in the occupied territories, but in the Israeli army in all its forms: “As a Jew,” he wrote, “I am repelled by the crimes this militia commits against the Palestinian people. It is both my Jewish and human duty to resolutely refuse to take any part in this army. As the son of a people victim to pogroms and destruction, I cannot be a part of your insane policies. As a human being, it is my duty to refuse to participate in any institution which commits crimes against humanity.” [...]<sup>12</sup>

References to “crimes against humanity” and other fetishistic expressions of the Israeli state, used with increasing frequency by Jewish proletarians to denounce the policies of the Israeli bourgeoisie, also show that the national cohesion built on the past martyrdom is less and less solid. It’s also an interesting sign of the erosion of national unity. The Israeli nation may be sealed by a series of extremely powerful factors, rooting the aclassist legend of a Jewish people in a great historical-religious tragedy whose function is to freeze all social contradiction, but it cannot prevent the proletariat from revolting against the material degradation of its conditions of existence.

Among those who yesterday proclaimed their unconditional support for the State of Israel on the basis of the myth of the Promised Land, of the

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<sup>11</sup> The Alternative Information Center (AIC) brings together Israeli and Palestinian activists fighting against the Israeli occupation. Several of them have been prosecuted on several occasions for their activities. [In 2016, the AIC was dissolved by a court for “illegal activities”; it reconstituted itself as AIC-Palestine three years later, establishing its headquarters in the territories administered by the Palestinian Authority.]

<sup>12</sup> [See the full text here: <https://wri-irg.org/en/news/2003/yahni.htm>]

Chosen People, on the basis of the difficulties of building this little homeland in the middle of the desert, on the basis of the suffering endured during the Second World War... many of them today find it increasingly difficult to justify the terrorist and murderous activity of the Israeli State in this way. The war and the worsening social situation are putting more and more Israeli proletarians at odds with the ideology of “their” bourgeoisie. Cancellation of benefits, rising school taxes and health costs, ever more painful austerity plans, a fully militarized living space, repression of any alternative, a growing disparity between rich and poor, a visible and spectacular rise in suicide rates<sup>13</sup>... all these elements of the current national landscape inevitably lead proletarians in Israel to materially consider their position as exploited and not as Jews or Israelis. And from this point of view, once the specific myths on which it is based – myths that are specific to each nation – are set aside, the State of Israel reveals its true nature and appears for what it is: neither more nor less than a vulgar capitalist State, like any other. Beyond the egalitarian myths of the “founding fathers of Zion” and the plans for the Holy Land, there is simply the need for a ruling class which, in order to ensure the smooth running of capitalism in the region, structures its development around the pursuit of profit, with all the consequences this implies in terms of domestic and foreign policy. Like any ruling class, the Israeli bourgeoisie not only needs to maintain order within its borders to keep its businesses running, it also needs to provide itself with the means to expand in the face of its competitors. So to discipline “their” proletariat and enable imperialist development (while ensuring the maintenance of capitalist order in the region), the local exploiters demand a compact and disciplined army, they impose compulsory conscription, they develop a strong State, a State capable of repressing expanding, colonizing, deporting, massacring... in short, capable of committing a series of crimes in every respect similar to those denounced against the Jews and which served precisely to justify the establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine.

And indeed, the imperative need to conquer territories forces the State to reveal the barbaric nature of its being, in Israel as everywhere else in the world. As a result, officers and ministers are forced to spell out their

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<sup>13</sup> A report published in the daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*, highlights the staggering increase in anxiety and emotional disorders among young people in Israel. In 2001, more than one thousand young people attempted suicide, including well over a hundred children aged 8 to 12. These figures represent a 10% increase over the previous year. Meanwhile, “about the gap between rich and poor, a report presented these days to the Knesset reveals that Israel is the second Western country in the world, after the United States, in terms of income disparity.” *La Repubblica*, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

orders more clearly, to explicitly state their intentions. The myth of the martyred nation takes a beating. Yitzhak Rabin had already said “We will break their bones” at the beginning of the first Intifada, and his soldiers didn’t hold back. Today [in 2003], the talk is purely and simply of deporting or mass murdering the proletarians locked up in the camps. Ex-general Effi Eitam, appointed [at the time] minister by Sharon, found the idea of “transfer” politically “enticing”: according to this former Labor politician, “not many Arabs will remain here” in the event of a full-scale war. As Sergio Yahni pointed out, “we are now witness to an intellectual debate amongst Israelis of the worst kind: a discussion about the possible deportation and the mass killing of Palestinians”. “Ethnic cleansing”, “transfer”, “deportation”, “apartheid” – these are the words, more and more often used, of the final solution that the international bourgeoisie is preparing for the proletarians in Palestine. Capitalism remains capitalism, whatever its color, even to the point of caricature: Israeli officers recently took the initiative of tattooing numbers on the arms of Palestinians they arrested.

In short, Israeli proletarians are no doubt listening with less credulity to the fables told by the Israeli bourgeoisie to regularly send them and their children to the front. The human price they have to pay to defend the national idea is increasingly at odds with the material horror of war.

Of course, these resistances still have a hard time breaking through the barriers of national prejudice. As we’ve seen, reactions are few and far between, and are still mostly confined to a point of view opposing “good” policy against “bad” policy for the country. But, while not underestimating the danger posed by the absence of a genuine revolutionary program, we persist in defending that these ideological illusions are less important than the events themselves: today in Israel, young proletarians are refusing to perform military service and they are resolutely confronting the social contempt to which they are subjected; conscripts are making public the reasons why they no longer wish to fight; retired soldiers are launching appeals to refuse to go to the occupied territories; entire families are supporting the choice of refractory reservists despite the financial burden represented by the consequent loss of any salary<sup>14</sup>.

The hatred of war takes many forms, from conscientious objection to outright refusal, and beyond the inevitable confusion inherent in any

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<sup>14</sup> Soldiers who refuse to fight, and are therefore thrown into prison, no longer receive the wages of their regular jobs, unlike those who agree to serve. This threat to wages is obviously a huge material obstacle put in place by the State to dissuade proletarians from joining the refusenik camp.

outline of resistance to capitalism and war, the reality is there: in a space as ideologically and militarily controlled as Israel, proletarians are once again putting forward their elementary interests – not to die – and organizing to stand up for them.

The letter sent to “his” general by a young Israeli soldier refusing to fight reveals more explicitly this class point of view and the opposition of interests existing between bourgeois generals and proletarian soldiers. This letter, entitled “My reply to the general”, is another, albeit somewhat hesitant, but nonetheless very interesting testimony to this process which, everywhere and at any time, leads soldiers, who are thrown by their leaders on the road to hatred of the neighboring proletarians, to look instead to the side of the murderous emissaries, to the side of the patriots, to the side of the military authority.

To the general who summoned him in October [2002] to “operational duties” in the Gaza Strip, reservist Yigal Bronner replied that he knew that this mission implied obeying orders, and that at some point he would find himself in a tank facing an officer who had himself obeyed superior orders, and who would in turn order him to drop a shell on Palestinians. “I’m the gunner. I’m the final small cog in the wheel of this sophisticated war machine. I am the last and least link in the chain of command. I am just supposed to obey orders. To reduce myself to stimulus-and-response. To hear the command ‘Fire!’ and squeeze the trigger. To burn it into the awareness of every Palestinian. To complete the grand demarche. And do it all with the natural simplicity of a robot who senses nothing beyond the shaking of the tank as the shell is ejected from the gun barrel and flies to its target. But I have one defect, he said, paraphrasing Brecht, I am a man and I am capable of thought... Therefore, I have to turn down your summons to duty. I won’t come along to squeeze the trigger on your behalf.” [...]<sup>15</sup>

As the price of his candor, Yigal Bronner is sentenced to 28 days in prison, during which he is subjected to incessant mistreatment and humiliation. He worked 14 hours a day in the kitchens of a barracks for young conscripts, he was forbidden to talk to other prisoners, had his personal belongings confiscated, had no pillows or blankets to sleep on, and was humiliated by being forced to wear a hat on his head all day long<sup>16</sup>. In short,

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<sup>15</sup> [See the full text here: <https://wri-irg.org/en/news/htdocs/31102002a.html>]

<sup>16</sup> But he never lost heart. In a letter, he asserted: “There is no doubt that it is better to sit in jail, isolated, wearing a hat, silent, washing dishes and peeling onions. I prefer – by far – to shed tears when I cut bag after bag of onions over the tears that arise whenever I conjure up images of the occupation.”

like all those who are subjected to imbecilic obedience, he endures the usual cowardice of all the world's armies and all the world's States. But like so many other proletarians in Palestine, Israel or elsewhere in the world, these vexations are building tomorrow's determinations, those that will lead today's Israeli refuseniks to become tomorrow's internationalist revolutionaries. And let's bet that when they will do, the proletariat will no longer respond to the generals' violence with letters alone.

WE ARE NEITHER ISRAELI NOR PALESTINIAN, NEITHER JEWISH NOR MUSLIM... WE ARE THE PROLETARIAT!

The slogan that serves as the title of this article is inspired by the scathing riposte delivered by English strikers to their exploiters who, during the so-called First World War, accused them of being accomplices of the enemy: "We are neither English nor German, we are the proletariat!" they retorted. In a situation of imperialist war, this political clarification, here vigorously and proudly thrown back in the faces of the English nationalists, always represents a leap of quality essential to the development of revolution, not only because this disassociation from national union contains the confrontation with "our own" bourgeoisie, but also because by refusing the national identity, to which the class enemy wants to enchain them, proletarians simultaneously promote the natural links that unite them with the proletarians of other nations. This is the essence of revolutionary defeatism. Denouncing "our" bourgeoisie as a direct enemy and confronting it ("we are not English..."), while at the same time asserting itself as a revolutionary class ("we are the proletariat...") is a phenomenal stimulus to the generalization of class struggle, even in the so-called opposing camp.

This is also what is at stake in the breaches that could develop within this national union so indispensable to the State of Israel if it is to continue to assume its role of watchdog in the Middle East. The current refusals to serve are clearly embarrassing for the State, but if they are to remain more than mere "conscientious objections", relatively bearable and manageable by the State, they must necessarily be armed with a social perspective. A social perspective that lies not so much in the obligatory expansion of the number of refuseniks, but in seeing these proletarians openly define their rejection of the army as a full-fledged confrontation with capitalism, as a confrontation not only with "corrupt" ministers and "bad" generals, but with the whole system which has produced them, with "their own" bourgeoisie, with the State in its entirety.

“We are neither Israeli...”: exploitation knows no borders, we cannot defend the borders that mark out our exploitation; we have no common interests with the bourgeoisie who exploit us and send us to fight; we want the defeat of “our” exploiters, of “our” bourgeoisie, of “our country”, to abolish all exploitation and all borders...

“... nor Palestinian...”: by working for the defeat of capitalism wherever we are, we are practically encouraging proletarians on the other side to continue and intensify their struggle, calling on our class brothers and sisters in the opposing national camp to recognize themselves as class brothers and sisters, to join the ranks of those who are called refuseniks, to disobey their own officers, to use our networks to desert, to fraternize with us, to use our own spaces to defeat “their” bourgeoisie together...

“We are the proletariat!”: our identity is not national, it is social; but we are much more than construction workers in Gaza or Tel Aviv, much more than Palestinian stone-throwers or Israeli refuseniks, much more than the sociological categories in which they seek to confine us... as the proletariat, we are much more than a mass of exploited, we are a revolutionary social project aiming to abolish all social classes, we are communism.

No doubt the proletariat in Israel is not yet capable of developing a revolutionary practice articulated around such audacious formulations (not more than in Palestine or in the rest of the world today, by the way), but the few ruptures we have hailed in this text, however isolated or confused they may be, bear witness to the ineluctable development of the opposition to the capitalist State’s morbid and barbaric projects, and they are committed to this path.

As we have emphasized, the strength of these ruptures lies in the fact that they arise from within, that they practically confront their own army, their own State, their own ideologies, even if programmatic clarity is still dramatically lacking, even if formulations are clumsy, if not totally inadequate. The path of class struggle is marked out by the very development of the capitalist catastrophe, by capitalism’s inability to offer anything else than increased exploitation and war. And these determinations will force the proletariat to recognize itself more openly as a revolutionary subject, to go beyond national contingencies, to explicitly advocate revolutionary defeatism and to fully affirm the abolition of the State as a perspective.

Even if this is not yet the case socially, minorities are already trying, against the current, to stand up for certain aspects of this perspective. This

is the case, for example, of a leaflet signed “Jews against Zionism”, distributed on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002 in London during a leftist demonstration “for the rights of Palestinians”, in which, here too, “Jews” denounce the crimes of “their” State, but in a more global perspective which they link to the abolition of all States:

“Zionism is the predictable outcome of worldwide nationalism, colonialism and statism. Born at a time when the world was being carved up and the European nation-state system consolidated, Zionism is the accomplice of Western power and a scourge of the Palestinians. The Zionist alliance with power and tyranny does not make it the guardian of Jews. It has always collaborated with racists and murderers to further its colonization of Palestine. On the contrary, we support those who seek to overthrow ‘their own’ governments and leaders. We support struggles with the potential to undermine the state and capitalism. (...) The founders of Zionism rejected the possibility of overcoming anti-Semitism through popular struggle and social revolution. (...) The racism and oppression shown by the Israeli state is not unusual. The historical betrayals of Zionism are not unique: they are common to all forms of nationalism. Our anti-Zionism is based on opposition to all states, all borders and nations; to all the rulers and exploiters of the world.

For a global intifada and an end to all borders!”<sup>17</sup>

The permanent battlefields being created by the Israeli and Palestinian States as a living space, as well as the macabre use of martyrology to feed their respective needs for cannon fodder, are prompting more and more proletarians to break with their respective State religions and to identify

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<sup>17</sup> The authors themselves denounce as “leftist” the demonstration “for Palestinian rights” during which they distributed this leaflet. They joined forces with “other anti-capitalist troublemakers” to lead the demonstration under a banner proclaiming “Jews against Zionism... and against all states”. Beyond the criticisms that must be made of this leaflet (it does not explicitly put forward the proletariat as a revolutionary subject and, even if it is to question it, it remains too much on the terrain of bourgeois categories: the Palestinians, the Jews), if we publish it, it is also because the Israeli State religion is here attacked by proletarians supposed to be subjected to this ideology, which gives even more strength to the positions defended therein. It will be objected that the proletariat has no homeland and that there is therefore no reason, a priori, to refer explicitly to the countries or cultures of origine of these militants calling for the destruction of the State. But the contradiction is only apparent, for it is not as Israeli nationals that these comrades sign, but as anti-nationals, as enemies of the Israeli nation and of all nations, of all nationalism. This is the dynamic of revolutionary defeatism. In the final analysis, it’s precisely the distance traveled between the authors’ origin (Jewish religion or Israeli nationality) and their goal (against all States, all nationalism) that makes their approach more profoundly internationalist, rather than an opportunistic or platonic appeal. To put it another way, waiving a banner in Israel advocating “Down with the State of Israel, down with all States” has a far greater political impact than the same banner in Palestine. [Read the full text: <http://troploin0.free.fr/biblio/zajaz/>]



their common enemy. And this common enemy, at all times, whatever our nationality, remains capitalism, the State that structures it, the army that defends it, the bourgeoisie that embodies it.

In the face of all those who try to reduce our anti-capitalist revolts to a national terrain, let us claim loud and clear the flag of the stateless people, the struggle of the downtrodden, the international perspective of a classless society.

Let's develop our organizations regardless of our nationalities. On the contrary, let's seek to fraternize, to make contact on both sides of the border, and to develop militant links enabling proletarians on both sides to escape the officers, mullahs or rabbis who seek to recruit them.

Together, let's develop the struggle against "our own" bourgeoisie! Let's turn our guns and oppose those who send us to war for killing and being killed! Let's develop revolutionary defeatism!

It's against the backdrop of this relentless struggle being waged by the proletariat in Palestine, and of the first breaches in the national union taking place in the State of Israel, that we propose here as a "Workers' Memory" a leaflet dating from 1943 in which revolutionary militants call on "Jewish" proletarians to fight against "their own" bourgeoisie, thus breaking violently with anti-fascism and Stalinism, which then sought to describe every German as their enemy.

"Don't believe the nationalist liars. The German and Italian workers are victims like us, they are our class brothers", declared the militants of the Revolutionary Communists, addressing the "Jewish workers" in Yiddish.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow, against all those who seek to divide us, to divert our struggles, to find "differences" in situations to better justify belonging to a specific people (whether "chosen" or "martyred"), we will respond, like the authors of the leaflet: "the capitalists are united against us, let's unite against the capitalists!".

MARCH 2003.



LEAFLET:

JEWISH WORKERS, COMRADES

May Day is the day of the international proletariat, the day of proletarian fraternization. The new world war has already been going on for four years. It's a war that doesn't affect the rich so much as the poor. You are persecuted, mistreated, exploited and exterminated.

CLASS AGAINST CLASS

International capitalism constantly needs fresh cannon fodder, cheap labor. French, German, Polish, Italian, Czech and other workers are oppressed just like us Jews. In Africa, America, Russia, believers or non-believers, Latins, Arabs, blacks, yellows, whites, workers are crushed by their own oppressors. All over the world, imperialism has locked proletarians up in a huge concentration camp.

How many capitalist Jews are deported? Not a single one. They've all left France. And the masses of Jewish proletarians are dying, deported in sealed trains going to the extermination camps. Many live in hiding, without papers or money, abandoned by the Jewish bourgeoisie and bureaucrats.

CLASS AGAINST CLASS

Not a single French capitalist was deported. Not a single German or Italian capitalist fell on the Eastern Front, not a single Anglo-American capitalist died in the deserts of Africa.

All proletarians are sold and exploited by their capitalists. All slaves are our brothers, all capitalists and all traitors are our enemies. Never again people against people, but class against class.

In the organization Todt, German, Jewish and other slaves have to work, oppressed by the SS and sometimes guarded by Jewish cops. French mobile guards persecute French workers. The Gestapo is looking for deserters and German refugees. The GPU shoots Russian communists. British and American police operate against strikes in England and America.

BUT THE WORKERS ARE RESPONDING

In Arcachon, four hundred German workers and a thousand French Jews went on strike for better food. Ten Germans and twenty-five Jews were

shot, but the strike continued. The Germans shared the food with the Jews, as the SS had forbidden the distribution of food to Jews. French and foreign workers join forces in the fight against the French and German gendarmerie.

German workers are deserting, passive resistance is spreading across the country. Every month, thousands upon thousands of men are shot. All over the world, there are many strikes and struggles. The imperialist war is turning into a civil war against the capitalist executioners.

JEWISH WORKERS, COMRADES, WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

With the Jewish bourgeoisie? They've always hated and betrayed you. They profit from the war while your blood flows. They are always united with the non-Jewish capitalists.

For what purpose are the Zionists proposing an agreement with the Jewish bourgeoisie for a "Jewish country"? Today, Churchill, Roosevelt and Goebbels are also in favor of a Jewish country that would be a new concentration camp for the Jewish masses. Thank you for such a Jewish country. The Jewish question can only be resolved through the fraternization of all workers, through the revolution all over the world. Without the victory of widespread proletarian revolution, the Jews will always be exploited and persecuted. Your place is with the proletarians of the world.

The Zionist movement is creating settlements, and many young people are coming to live there without many possibilities of life for these youth. Where does the money for youth go? The bureaucracy of the UGIF federation usurps all responsibility. Jewish youth, don't let yourself be exploited by the Zionists and the Jewish bureaucracy.

COMRADES

Think about our dead. Think about our brothers in the camps who are waiting. Think about your brothers, your sisters, your men and women, your fiancées, your children, your fathers and mothers who are in the camps with millions of Poles, Czechs, Russians, French and Germans, deported to hell. They are awaiting your action for their liberation.

They have understood that it is only through the action of all the oppressed that we can be saved. Have our comrades fallen in vain? Can you forget our brothers in the extermination camps?

Expect nothing from Roosevelt, Churchill or Stalin! Rely only on your own strength, on the revolutionary proletarians of every country.

Don't believe the nationalist liars. German and Italian workers are victims like us, they are our class brothers. For them, as for us, the SS is the main enemy.

The capitalists are united against us, let's unite against them! We are the strongest, we are the masses!

Down with imperialist war!

Down with nationalism!

Enough pogroms, massacres and deportations!

Long live the 1<sup>st</sup> May, the day of international proletarian fraternization!

Long live the new workers' international!

Forward for the world proletarian revolution!

Peace! Freedom! Bread!

MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 1943. REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS.



ABOUT THE LEAFLET AND ITS AUTHORS: THE "REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS"

Traces of the lessons the communists have learned from our historic struggle are rare and precious. The bourgeoisie, too, is aware of the value of these materials from the past, and spends immense energy obscuring the memory of our class, defaming our former comrades, distorting their struggles, destroying their press...

It is in the context of reappropriating our past that we present this leaflet signed "Revolutionary Communists" and distributed on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943, at the height of the war, in the south of France.

The little information we have on this document and the group that distributed it comes from several sources.

Firstly, we found the French translation of this leaflet in the book by Maurice Rajfus: *L'an prochain la révolution. Les communistes juifs immigrés dans la tourmente stalinienne. 1930-1945* (Editions Mazarine, Paris, 1985). ["Next year the revolution. Jewish immigrant communists in the Stalinist turmoil"] Here's the historian's only comment:

"Beyond the terminology and slogans modeled on the Communist International's 'Third Period', this leaflet is a remarkable document because it

breaks with the absolute trust it was appropriate to grant to the ‘great allies’.”<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, our research on the traces of communist minorities during this period when the proletariat is crushed led us to take a closer look at the historical trajectory of the group that produced this document. *Jüdische Arbeiter, Kameraden!* was written, published and distributed by militants organized in the RKD group, *Revolutionäre Kommunisten Deutschlands*.

The organizational and programmatic filiation of the Central European communists that led to the formation of the RKD is interesting, and we’ll summarize it here.

In 1935, in Austria, several groups of militants from the KPÖ Youth, *Kommunistische Partei Österreichs*, formed a fraction that became increasingly openly critical of the Stalinist party, before quickly breaking away and transforming itself into an autonomous organization under the name RKÖ, *Revolutionäre Kommunisten Österreichs*. In 1936-37, the RKÖ published the organ *Bolschewik*, whose motto was: “The enemy is in our own country!”. Their militancy was an indisputable point of reference for many militants who, like them, were in the process of breaking away from the Trotskyist movement, including the *Bolschewiki-Leninisten* group. From 1937 to 1938, the RKÖ, highly critical of the Trotskyist movement, asserted their internationalist character in the review *Der Einzige Weg*, which they published jointly with revolutionaries from Switzerland and Czechoslovakia.

In 1938, repression forced them into exile in Western Europe. They came closer to the positions of the “Revolutionary Workers League” (RWL) in the USA, which, in open opposition to the Trotskyist current, was committed to revolutionary defeatism during the struggle of our class in Spain. They published a number of pamphlets, the *Juniusbriefe*.

In 1939 and 1940, in Antwerp, Belgium, the RKÖ published the magazine *Der Marxist* and, in France, *Bulletin oppositionnel*. Around 1941, they

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<sup>18</sup> The author’s embarrassed reference to the “Third Period” of the Communist International to qualify the “class against class” assertions of the leaflet presented here, denotes a definite influence of the Trotskyist or democratic criticism of Stalinism. In fact, the CI has only opportunistically and momentarily recuperated mottos that have always belonged to the proletariat, and it is utterly counter-revolutionary to now assimilate them to the bourgeois fractions that have used them. Thus, the denunciation of social democracy as a bourgeois party, or the call to fight class against class, are part of the proletariat’s historical affirmations and ruptures. The fact that Stalinism momentarily used these slogans for its own bourgeois trafficking in alliance changes and re-alignments in no way invalidates these positions.

formed a breakaway group for a number of German Trotskyist militants in exile. They took the name *Revolutionäre Kommunisten Deutschlands* (RKD) instead of RKÖ.

In 1941, the RKD were mainly based in southern France, where they were very active, regularly publishing their own press despite exile, clandestinity and repression: the *RK-Bulletin*, from 1941 to 1943, and *Spartakus*, from 1943 to 1945. The analyses contained in their press show a strengthening of internationalist positions. In addition to their regular press, between 1942 and 1944 the RKD distributed ten internationalist leaflets (in German, Yiddish, French and Italian), under conditions of an extreme danger. The April 1945 issue of *Spartakus* contains an “Appeal of the Revolutionary Communists of Germany to the German Proletariat”, from which we bring a few strong excerpts here:

“Don’t forget that it was capitalism that put Hitler in power. It was capitalism that provoked the new world war... Despite their imperialist rivalries, the exploiters of all countries are united against the ‘danger’ of proletarian revolution, which, for them, is a mortal danger...

Allied and Russian capitalists rush to the aid of the German bourgeoisie against the German proletariat. The Russian capitalists, with Stalin at their head, are strangling any revolutionary movement. They have already liquidated the proletarian and revolutionary conquests of October 1917. Communists in Russia have been imprisoned and shot. The proletariat has been enslaved, just as in our country.

So, it’s only logical that the mass murderers of the Russian revolution are now deporting your fathers and sons, your husbands and brothers, subjecting them to forced labor. They forbid their own soldiers to speak with you, they slander you as ‘Nazis’ because they fear and want to prevent fraternization between German and Russian workers at all costs.

On the other hand, they made peace with some of the German capitalists and nobles, with Nazi Field Marshal Von Paulus. They rely on the Nazi chiefs and SS executioners they have pardoned. According to them only the German and Russian proletariats have a duty to hate and kill each other, while the capitalists grow fat: that is the will of Hitler, Stalin, Churchill and Co.

The English, American and French bourgeoisie do not act differently...”

To affirm communist positions also means to distinguish us from our enemies:

“We’re not social democrats, Stalinists or Trotskyites. We’re not interested in prestige. We are communists, revolutionary Spartakists.”

In 1942, in France, CR groups, *Communistes révolutionnaires*, were formed, and in 1943 and 1944, in the review *Fraternisation prolétarienne*, they defended positions similar to those developed by the RKD.

Despite the organizational autonomy that both groups have preserved, they nevertheless attempted to join forces, and even centralize their activity against Capital. Meetings, discussions, debates, etc., were organized jointly, always clandestinely. Together, they set up an international commission and published an organ, *L’Internationale*.

In 1944, the OCR, *Organisation Communiste Révolutionnaire* (“Revolutionary Communist Organization”), was created and published two journals – *Rassemblement Communiste Révolutionnaire* (“Revolutionary Communist Gathering”) and *Pouvoir Ouvrier* (“Workers’ Power”) – jointly with the CRs. The RKD, together with the OCR, published *Vierte Kommunistische Internationale* (“Fourth Communist International”) in 1944 and 1945. So, during the 1940s, there was a revolutionary milieu in which these three groups: CR, OCR and RKD strengthened their programmatic positions in confrontation/demarcation with Bordigists, “anarchists”, councilists and left-wing Trotskyists.

In 1945, repression finally got the upper hand over the RKD militants, who structured themselves against and beyond borders, political families, repression and discouragement to affirm our communist program ever more strongly.

Despite the prolonged isolation and repression of the darkest years of counter-revolution, the 1930s and 1940s, these three groups of militant communists developed class activity from one rupture to the next one. They worked on programmatic reconstruction after the defeat of the 1917-23 wave of struggle<sup>19</sup>. And they did so while resisting many so-called

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<sup>19</sup> The OCR text “Revolution and counter-revolution in Russia”, which appeared in *Le Prolétaire* in 1946, is an invaluable contribution to understanding the process of programmatic re-appropriation by the proletariat in Russia during the 17-23 wave of struggle, a period marked by the greatest feats of struggle and the lack of rupture that explain its tragic aftermath. This text constitutes a fundamental milestone in the internationalist, classist and militant criticism of this huge and terrible experience of revolutionary confrontation for our class.

communist fractions bogged down in centrist opposition (Trotskyist or Bordigist), locked into the problematic of supporting and submitting to the policies of the USSR, which based its domination on the defeat of the revolution and the restoration of the “Communist International”. The latter, gangrened by counter-revolution right from the start, quickly became one of its spearheads. In short, the militants organized within the CR, OCR and RKD had to resist the historical process of counter-revolution.

It was within this framework and against the current that these groups pursued:

- the necessary assessment of the revolutionary struggles of 1917-23, which led them to assume, through their various ruptures, the organization of...
- ... the revolutionary defeatism, notably through the publication, in several languages and in several countries, of appeals for the development and the unification of the anti-war struggle, including clear denunciations of the solidarity of all bourgeois fractions and all countries against the proletariat, and putting forward organizational mottos corresponding to the unique and worldwide interests of the proletariat.
- the regrouping and international centralization of revolutionary forces.

Against Stalinism, which was ultra-dominant at the time, thousands of proletarians turned to Trotskyism to structure their struggle against the bourgeoisie. While Trotskyism generally defended the bourgeois reformist program, the Trotskyist current at this time also gathered a large number of combative proletarians who had partially broken with Stalinism (the experience of revolution and counter-revolution in Spain is invaluable in this respect) by attempting to impose on them the suicidal and counter-revolutionary policy of its “critical support”. The communist movement, traversing the whole of bourgeois society, will then express itself in those minorities who do not stop at the Trotskyite pseudo-rupture, but also break with Trotskyism itself, which they denounce as a centrist expression, as part of the counter-revolution, and on this basis, they assert classist and internationalist positions that are invariant and intransigent. The RKD are an example of this communist current. Initially organized within the left of the Trotskyist opposition, these Revolutionary Communists were bearers of revolutionary positions, in complete rupture with the Trotskyist current. The strength and clarity of their rupture with the Trotskyists, as well as that of the CR and the future OCR, lay in the need to take a clear stance on



the war, to question their own trajectory and draw programmatic lessons from it.

The RKD comrades who sign the leaflet calling for proletarian solidarity and revolutionary defeatism against all bourgeois sides are therefore part of this small minority of militants who, from rupture to rupture, emerged as one of the few militant organizations to affirm revolutionary defeatism as a living materialization of proletarian internationalism. Current and future militants have much to learn from their activities. This is why the republication of this document is of major importance, for a number of reasons.

Although it is addressed to “Jewish” proletarians, who at the time expressed themselves mainly in Yiddish, it is one of the few documents that goes beyond and criticizes Jewish specificity. To define oneself as pro- or anti-Jewish, pro- or anti-Zionist, pro- or anti-Israel... is always a racist, counter-revolutionary attitude. It means submitting to bourgeois polarization. The following paragraph from the leaflet is so clear and subversive that it preserves its full force even today:

“Jewish workers, comrades, which side are you on?

With the Jewish bourgeoisie? They’ve always hated and betrayed you. They profit from the war while your blood flows. They are always united with the non-Jewish capitalists.”

The proletariat is neither Jewish, German, French, American nor Chinese. It is a world class with identical interests: communist revolution for the advent of a human society. It is a class that suffers the same exploitation perpetrated by a single world class, the bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie is decomposing into a thousand facets... competing in the market of our exploitation, but fundamentally it has the same interests everywhere: the perpetuation of capitalism. Bringing this reality to the fore in 1943 is a powerful statement to be emphasized.

Denouncing the ideology of the “Jewish people” is important for a number of reasons. The ideology of Jewish persecution was very structuring during and especially after the war, in relation to two axes:

- create a justification for the constitution of a Jewish Gendarmerie-State in the Middle East;

- create/reinforce the bourgeois fascism/antifascism polarization. This polarization still traps many proletarian reactions on this bourgeois terrain. It's a card that the bourgeoisie has not yet ran out.

Only class positions can enable communists to overcome and negate this anti-proletarian religious-sociological-historical hodgepodge of Jewish specificity.

Choosing to republish this leaflet today also means taking part in the invariable defense of the communist' historic position of internationalism. This leaflet clearly stands on our class terrain of struggle against nations and homelands... against capital and all its wars. The slogan: "Never again people against people, but class against class", is a communist motto. The Stalinists have hijacked it and used it to further confuse the proletariat. The Stalinist bourgeois fraction promoted racism and nationalism under the guise of anti-Nazism... as did the Stalinist poet Ilya Ehrenburg, who throughout the war wrote filthy calls for murder and rape:

"Kill! Kill! In the German race there is nothing but evil; not one among the living, not one among the yet unborn but is evil! Follow the precepts of Comrade Stalin. Stamp out the fascist beast once and for all in its lair! Use force and break the racial pride of these German women. Take them as your lawful booty. Kill! As you storm onward, kill, you gallant soldiers of the Red Army."

The reappropriation of the slogan "Never again people against people, but class against class" by these RKD militants in 1943, is therefore not just, as historian Rajfus implied, a "motto modelled on the "Third Period" of the Communist International", but an expression of the struggle of the proletariat, which is trying to impose its fight on its own terrain, internationalism!

The proletariat has been destroyed by fascist/antifascist polarization. Tens of millions of proletarians have been serving (and were swallowed up) under the banners of fascism as well as of Stalinist, social-democratic, "anarchist", Christian and other forms of antifascism. Since the defeat of the revolution (circa 1923), this polarization has paved the way for the massive destruction of the proletariat in 1938-45.

The RKD current attempted to perpetuate the programmatic legacy of the communists of the 1917-23 wave of struggle. To illustrate our point, we quote a call from Makhnovists, from May 1919. This call was part of the

uncompromising struggle of our comrades in Ukraine against Jewish pogroms and for the internationalist struggle:

“We must proclaim everywhere that our enemies are exploiters and oppressors of various nationalities: the Russian manufacturer, the German iron magnate, the Jewish banker, the Polish aristocrat... The bourgeoisie of all countries and all nationalities is united in a bitter struggle against the revolution, against the laboring masses of the whole world and of all nationalities.”

Peter Arshinov, “History of the Makhnovist Movement”, 1921

While emphasizing the strong points of this leaflet, we have to admit that there are also either confusions or weaknesses that we need to overcome through the weapon of criticism in order to strengthen the militant ruptures of our class. Let’s highlight this one to begin with: “For them, as for us, the SS is the main enemy.” Our main enemy, our only enemy, is capital and all the competing fractions that support it. In France, it was not the SS, but the French police and gendarmerie, who carried out most of the repression during the war years. These bourgeois armed forces were further aided by the Stalinists, who killed some of our comrades or denounced them to the Gestapo. The ideology of the main enemy implies the existence of secondary enemies, and therefore of distinct proletarian responses in each case, which would be tantamount to defining a minimum program of resistance and a maximum program for after the revolution.

Against this ideology of main and secondary enemies, the proletariat put forward the motto: “the enemy is in our own country, it’s our own bourgeoisie!” The position of revolutionaries against capitalist war is always the same: oppose social revolution to war, fight against “one’s own” bourgeoisie and “one’s own” national State. Historically, this position has been called revolutionary defeatism, because it openly proclaims that the proletariat must fight the enemy facing it in “its own” country, that it must act to bring about its defeat, and that only in this way can it participate in the revolutionary unification of the world proletariat, only in this way can the proletarian revolution develop throughout the world.

There’s another position in the flyer that we find problematic, and that’s the final motto “Peace!” What kind of peace are we talking about? There is no peace per se. The bourgeoisie imposes social peace through the generalized slaughter of proletarians and the destruction of our class forces. We know that capital’s peace is the continuation of its war against our interests, our very lives and our social project of revolution. To stop the

massacres and deportations, the proletariat must intensify its class war, revolutionize the world, and bring down the power of money and terror embodied by the bourgeoisie. Against bourgeois terror, the proletariat is forced to use its class terror. But historically, it fights for the abolition of all terror, of all States.

Generally speaking, “bread, peace and freedom” is a social-democratic motto. But while the bourgeoisie hides behind the motto “peace”, proletarian interests have historically expressed themselves under the motto “bread and freedom”. In many countries, proletarian struggles have often waved this flag. In our historic effort to clarify our revolutionary program, it’s vital to distinguish ourselves clearly from our enemies, and to oppose their political and disorganizing demagoguery with precise mottos that give a direction to our struggle.

At a time of total crushing of this revolutionary wave, in the midst of a period of intense white terror, our RKD comrades showed us that the proletariat, in the war years of 1939-45, was still re-boosting the communist challenge against the bourgeois world.

An expression of the communist vanguard, by this group of “Revolutionary Communists”, far from becoming discouraged and abandoning the struggle, gives clear perspectives to our historic struggle, which are still valid today. While this period was generally one of defeat and crushing for the proletariat, traces of the ultra-minority communist struggle can be found over the years.


Comrades, if you have any further information on this group and in general on any expression of our struggle during and after the 1939-45 period, please let us know.

AGAINST THE AMNESIA THAT THE BOURGEOISIE WOULD LIKE TO STRIKE US WITH,  
LET’S TAKE PART IN THE REAPPROPRIATION OF OUR CLASS MEMORY!

*English translation: The Friends of the Class War*







Original title in French: Nous ne sommes ni israéliens, ni palestiniens, ni juifs, ni musulmans... Nous sommes le prolétariat!

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**Let's Turn  
Capitalist War &  
Peace into  
World Social  
Revolution**

