

# Třídni válka / Class War

*presents*



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## Clarifications on Revolutionary Defeatism

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*/ CLASS WAR / We publish here our translation into English of the important contribution made by the comrades of Proletarios internacionalistas concerning the very essence and development of revolutionary defeatism. At a time when the relentless course of capitalist war and peace is tending to find vigor with a “solution” such as a “military conflict”, not only on a regional scale but also more globally on a planetary scale, and to encompass ever more proletarians with or without uniforms in the process of the wider reproduction of this world of misery, destruction and exploitation, the communists should highlight and participate in what enables our class to forge its weapons and organize itself accordingly.*

*We firmly believe that the international discussion of the following theses is a part of this militant effort, whose ultimate goal is the eradication of the unbearable “existing” that*

*human prehistory, made up of class society, has imposed on us for centuries and millennia... We can only fully support any militant initiative that sets itself up as an implacable critique of the world of value and money, and whose social practice is rooted in the development of that life plan for humanity that is communism.*

*And as our comrades from Proletarios internacionalistas say: “On this terrain of the struggle, of confrontation, but also of comradeship and life, we urge revolutionary militants and groups to centralize their efforts with ours in the organization of revolutionary defeatism, and in general, in the organization of all the tasks required by the community of struggle against capital, taking into account, of course, what the current context allows us to do in terms of capacities and possibilities.” Have a good reading...*

*CW.*

# Clarifications on Revolutionary

## ----- Defeatism -----

*The text we publish below is part of the next issue of our review Revolution, dedicated to imperialist war and revolutionary defeatism.*

*We decided to move up its circulation both because of the delay we have with the review, as well as because of the importance of this document in the discussions that are taking place in sectors of our community of struggle that assume the internationalist tasks of revolutionary defeatism.*

It should come as no surprise that revolutionary defeatism is back on the agenda in our community of struggle. Just look at how a large part of the proletariat lives today: under the bombs. And the “privileged” who do not live to the rhythm of warplanes or to the sound of military boots, suffer in their flesh the pain of their class brothers and sisters as well as the *war effort* developed by all the States.

It is entirely natural that, in the face of the bloodbath flooding the old world, our class not only resists being turned into cannon fodder, but also manifests its refusal by pointing its weapons at the direct agents of the carnage. Facing the disgusting flags of the homeland, under whose folds thousands of proletarians are massacred, the threat of revolutionary defeatism is haunting the armies of the bourgeoisie.

Let us clarify, before anything else, against the caricature conceptions issued by the rotten leftist or ultra-leftist milieu, that revolutionary defeatism is neither an ideal to be achieved, a nice slogan launched by revolutionaries so that the proletarians stop killing each other and turn their guns against “their” own officers, nor a conception that some “revolutionaries”, who are supposed to provide class consciousness, import from outside the proletariat. Revolutionary defeatism is a social practice, or better said, **a primary determination emerging from the social contradictions generated by the imperialist war** within our class. If it returns as a central focus of the community of struggle against capital, superseding other series of questions, it is not because it appears on the “agenda” of some revolutionary militants, but because the generalization of the war spurs our class to oppose it.

Obviously, there are many material obstacles to the organization and development of the defeatist practice, as shown by the impressive development of the imperialist war. It is a series of limits that hinder the unleashing of this imposing force, and that

configure the present state in which the proletariat finds itself as a class. In general, these are the same limits and weaknesses that affect all aspects of the proletarian struggle, from the most elementary material defense of our living conditions to the revolts of our epoch. The main limit is the international balance of forces, as a product of the historical defeat of our class, from which it has not yet managed to escape. This defeat contains a series of implications (tearing apart and therefore negation of our experiences of struggle, weakening of our associationism, decomposition of our unitary force, ideologization of our revolutionary program...) which can only be confronted in the very development of the struggle against capital, by pushing the exploited to admit their own defeat in order to defeat the enemy. The social revolution is a historical process in which the defeat is part of its contradictory process of affirmation.

The structuring as a revolutionary direction of its own experience of struggle, catalyzed through its vanguard minorities, has always marked the evolution of the war against the bourgeoisie in moments of generalized crisis. To believe that a revolutionary perspective can emerge outside the immediate proletarian struggle against exploitation and its inherent historical dimension, or worse, to consider that the latter is contained within capitalist reproduction, and therefore cannot aspire to any rupture with the existing social relation, means rowing in the direction of the development of the imperialist war and the maintenance of wage slavery.

Consequently, revolutionary defeatism, as a proletarian opposition to war, cannot separate its current action from its historical practice. It shakes all those who stand in its perspective so that they deepen the knowledge of their own praxis and its limits, in the complexity of the labyrinths proposed by the enemy, specifying more and more clearly the arduous road that dismantles the armies of the bourgeoisie, which place the existing social order between a rock and a hard place. It is at the heart of this defeatist practice, of the discussions developed within our community of struggle, outside and against the scholastic and doctrinaire spectacle, that we are including this small contribution.

Starting from the ABC of defeatism of our class, we want to clarify some issues that are in opposition to the caricatures and reductionist analyses and that are raised under its banner. The purpose of the text is clear, to contribute to **delineate the revolutionary defeatist terrain** from the various simulacra and theological events, **especially from what we call “simplistic defeatism”**, and, at the same time, to urge all revolutionary militants to centralize together the tasks that the present moment requires of us.

Due to the draft status of this contribution, which is still being discussed and needs some clarifications, we preferred to present the document in the form of theses.

Revolutionary defeatism does not start from a set of ideas or mottos, but it is the result of the material conditions of existence of the proletariat under the regime of imperialist war. It is an immediate, primary practice, arising from the material needs and interests of the proletarians, that includes various levels of materialization and development, and whose basis is, as always, the struggle against exploitation, and therefore the struggle against “its” own bourgeoisie<sup>1</sup>. The defeat of “its” own bourgeoisie is equivalent to the defeat of “its” own army, of “its” own State.

This practice does not depend on what this or that proletarian thinks, for it is the whole of his material interests that pushes him to oppose the imperialist war and the different armies of the bourgeoisie as well. Defeatism is determined by the blows endured by our class in the war, by the dead, the wounded, the rapes, the repression, hunger, demoralization, attrition, sacrifice, humiliations, “war effort”..., that is to say, by the exacerbation of the social contradictions. Only from there arises clearly, as a material product inherent to the proletariat, the necessity and the possibility of revolutionary defeatism.

So, we’re not talking about a “pure” proletariat “disembarking” from the heavens, which would appear as an autonomous and revolutionary internationalist class against wars, and will leave no room for religion, nationalism or other ideologies of the bourgeoisie. This caricature position sees the class struggle as a concrete moment, that of the voluntary and organized development of the subversive activity of the proletariat, and not as a permanent reality of the capitalist mode of production, of the antagonisms generated by this society. Revolutionary defeatism is made to emerge from nothing, without seeing that it is from the development of the imperialist war that it emerges and not from heaven! In contrast to the theological vision, **revolutionary defeatism is the product of the development of the contradictions of war**, which pushes the proletariat to defend its material needs, and, like all aspects of the revolutionary program, it starts from its determinations as a class, from historical determinism and not from elements that would be introduced from outside.

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<sup>1</sup> Our conception of exploitation has nothing to do with the workerist conception of it, which consists of reducing it to a very concrete level of abstraction, the immediate process of production in industry, making this the place of exploitation, hiding the fact that it is a moment within a global process. In reality, capitalist exploitation stands as the appropriation of the social labor of the proletariat by capital and determines every moment lived by our class (including unemployment, indeed). The struggle against exploitation includes, therefore, the direct struggle from each of those moments.

## II/

**The mottos** and directives expressing revolutionary defeatism are the necessary and material formulation of the objective interests of the proletariat, synthesized in such formulas by its most determined minorities. The struggle against “their” own bourgeoisie, shooting at “their” officers, rejecting any “war effort”, sabotaging production, etc., **are not directives based on what the proletarians should do**, from the world of what should be, but materializations of the practical opposition of the proletariat. The articulation of the proletarian movement around these mottos and directives manifests the tendency to centralize its activity and its social force.

## III/

The motto of **fighting against “its own” bourgeoisie** synthesizes the **practice and central guideline** on which revolutionary defeatism is articulated. Far from being something exceptional, it is the daily practice of the exploited. The struggle against capitalism unfolds in the immediate struggle against exploitation, and this necessarily presuppose a struggle against “our” own bourgeoisie, against “our” own exploiter, against the repressors we have in front of us, against “our” own State. Of course, this has nothing to do with the nationality of the bourgeoisie or the government that assumes this function. At no time revolutionary defeatism can be reduced to the “struggle against the national bourgeoisie”. It is about insisting on the struggle against **the immediate bourgeois and the immediate forces of repression**, but as part of the world struggle of the proletariat against the world bourgeoisie.

Struggling against “our” own bourgeoisie is the only way to struggle against the world bourgeoisie. It is fundamental to insist that this is the only terrain of the internationalist struggle. **The struggle of the proletariat cannot rely on any intermediary**, on any mediation other than itself, and this is precisely why the struggle against capital is always an immediate struggle **against direct exploitation** and the State repression that defends it. It attacks the bases of global capital accumulation and the world State. In other words, the central characteristic of the struggle of the proletariat is **the organic centrality** of its direct action against capital, whereby, even if that struggle takes place in a single neighborhood, in a single district, in a single city, it contains the totality and represents, independently of the consciousness of its protagonists, the organic interests of the world proletariat.

Mottos like “revolutionary struggle against the bourgeois war” or others like “against the war, class war”, are **totally insufficient and centrist** if they are not

accompanied by directions how to concretize them that is, by the demand for the open struggle against “our own” bourgeoisie, for the defeat of “our own” State. To say that we are struggling against “any bourgeoisie, whatever it may be” or to call for the “revolutionary struggle against the war” without taking concrete measures for the defeat of “our own” bourgeoisie, means to fall into propaganda and to award a gold medal to chauvinism. We are fully aware that some comrades and expressions of our community of struggle try to express in these mottos the need for our class to stand out from the frameworks that develop on the ground, but without a clear defense of the immediate proletarian struggle they contribute to disarm the proletariat.

## IV/

The defeatist practice has diverse moments of development, as well as different forms of materialization, depending on the very development of the imperialist war. But at all moments revolutionary defeatism assumes the same content, the same direction, synthesized in that central motto of struggling against “our” own bourgeoisie, however much other particular mottos contained therein are evidently implemented as a result of that concrete practice. However, **the simplistic consideration that revolutionary defeatism** only occurs as a practice of the proletariat in uniform against “its” own army, against “its” own officers, in the context of an inter-bourgeois confrontation, hides a fundamental distinction induced by the moments of development of the imperialist war, and is presented as a weapon against the forms assumed by the struggle against “its” own bourgeoisie in those other moments.

Indeed, the imperialist war is expressed as an inter-bourgeois war with two well defined camps, with their fronts and rearguards [also called the home front, TN], typical **fronts war**, trench war, war of positions<sup>2</sup>, but also as a **war of occupation**, characterized by the military occupation of a region by an army coming from another country. But that’s not all. Imperialist war is also expressed as a **gendarmerie war** or a police war, that is to say, as a capital’s gendarme operation from one country to repress the revolt of the proletariat in another country. Clearly, this last moment harbors content and determinations very similar to the war of occupation.

That being said, and before dealing with these different moments, we wish to stress that we are not dealing, far from it, with pure and mutually exclusive situations, with elements that would appear in isolation, but with **moments on which the imperialist**

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<sup>2</sup> It is true that, since the generalization of military aviation, this war of fronts acquires new military logistics, which relativizes the classic war of fronts, but for the purpose of simplification we will use this characterization here.

**war is articulated.** They do not appear as a new situation, which should be addressed separately, but as the very development of the imperialist war which makes one or the other of these moments a determining element and which evolves dynamically between them. It is the class struggle itself and the needs of imperialist assertion which provokes the movement from one to the other.

Consequently, the war of fronts turns into a war of occupation and a gendarmerie war as well; the war of occupation assumes the form of war of fronts and/or of gendarmerie war; the form of gendarmerie war entails the war of occupation and/or of fronts, and so on. The material reality is so dynamic that sometimes it is extremely difficult to express how the whole (the imperialist war) and its particular moments are articulated. Consequently, revolutionary defeatism can be considered in different ways depending on the level of abstraction dealing with the question of war. Indeed, these particular moments are sometimes intertwined in such a way that different angle of the magnifying glass is placed can characterize the events differently. But it is necessary to understand these levels of abstraction in order not to mix them up and end up determining the concrete totality – and the tasks to be assumed – based on just one of these moments<sup>3</sup>.

Against “simplistic defeatism”, the central motto of revolutionary defeatism to struggle against “its” own bourgeoisie is expressed and affirmed in the different types of situations in which the proletariat finds itself directly confronted with the bourgeois army. Obviously particular mottos and directives are also generated, but as we said, they start from the same content, from the same direction and, therefore, are subsumed to that central motto.

## V/

Simplistic “defeatism” is not even capable of expressing the material needs of the proletariat in the midst of the war of fronts, reducing everything to a “fraternization” which is a mockery. “Fraternization” is claimed outside the global dynamics of the

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<sup>3</sup> We express this with all the difficulties and rigidity of the language. Let us take, in order to make ourselves understood, the current example of Palestine, bearing in mind that reality is always more complex. The war against “its” own bourgeoisie assumes a confrontation against the army of Israel insofar as the proletariat has to deal with an “army of occupation”, which assumes the function of its own bourgeoisie, of “its” direct repression, of “its” State. But, at the same time, in other places or moments, this struggle against “its” own bourgeoisie is articulated against Hamas or the PNA when these forces want to use it as cannon fodder in the inter-bourgeois war against the State of Israel, or simply when they assume their functions for the management of its exploitation. To deny the first defeatist practice on the basis of the existence of the second case, or vice versa, affirming in each case that a bourgeois faction is favored, supposes abandoning revolutionary defeatism and supporting, even if implicitly, one of the camps of the [class] enemy.



defeatist practice, as a premise, instead of being a consequence of it. It would be an ideal that a “soldier”, a “proletarian above all”, would have to assume, and once he does so, he turns his weapon against his own officers when he is (kindly?) asked to do so “from the other warring side”.

In material reality things happen in a very different way. **Revolutionary defeatism never has fraternization as its genuine starting point**, as pacifism would make us believe. In its revolutionary and therefore anti-pacifist meaning, the motto of fraternization is determined by the dynamics of the moment itself, by the attitude (practical position) taken by the soldiers, independently of the bourgeois “camp” in which they find themselves. Defeatism is not affirmed by raising white flags. On the contrary, the proletarians on whom defeatism is built on the front lines – on the home front it is affirmed as a challenging of the “war effort” –, and who begin their activity by disobeying the chain of command, far from offering their bare chest to the bullets of their “brothers in uniform” of the “other side”, shoot them down (and the death of “brothers” is not the most palatable form, of course). This action gives more determination to those who begin to shed their uniform, not only because of the rejection of their role, but anguished by the destiny that revolutionary defeatism has in store for them. The consistent proletarians shoot against the direct repressive forces of the bourgeoisie that are in front of them and want to destroy them, whatever “camp” they are from, whatever nationality they are, because they assume the function of subduing them. They are the forces of “their” own bourgeoisie, of “their” own State.

What is decisive at this moment of affirmation of revolutionary defeatism against the fronts is the intransigence of the proletarians in struggle (and therefore in arms) against “their” own bourgeoisie, that is to say, intransigence in their opposition to the officers on their backs, as well as to all the soldiers who hinder the struggle, whatever their “side”. This intransigence, which is determined by a series of factors (balance of forces, programmatical reappropriation...), is what marks the evolution of the movement and the degrees of autonomy that the proletariat manages to reach. As the proletariat grows stronger, expressing itself on all social fronts and distinguishing itself more and more clearly from the different factions of the bourgeoisie, it advances in its process of constitution as a class, assuming more and more important levels of revolutionary defeatism, openly assuming the revolutionary war. It’s the material process of revolutionary defeatism applied in the inter-bourgeois front war, it’s the transformation of imperialist war into class war. **The revolutionary destruction of the army is the work of the armed proletariat, its violent response.**

This destruction of the bourgeois army, taking the rebellion of the soldiers at the front as a reference, which we have synthesized here, cannot happen overnight without the most resolute minorities of our class organizing the centralization in time and space

of hundreds of small actions of revolutionary terror, of desertions, of runaways, insubordination, rebellion, hostage-taking, physical liquidation of officers, mottos and concrete directives on which the movement is articulated, etc., long-term preparation during which the proletariat forges the organization of revolutionary defeatism.

Obviously, this process is clearly marked by the international balance of forces between the classes. In a clear balance of forces favorable to the bourgeoisie, revolutionary defeatism tends to die from isolation, either phagocytized by a bourgeois faction, or by physical liquidation by the world State, or, generally, by both factors.

## VI/

The war of occupation, like the gendarmerie war, involves the displacement of the army from one country to settle and deploy in another. In fact, the gendarmerie war could be considered as a particular situation of a war of occupation. Let's say that the criterion that differentiates them, with all the precautions that must be taken in this type of affirmations, is that in the gendarmerie war the reason for intervention, beyond the contradictions and struggles that the bourgeoisie of one or another place may have, is directly the crushing of the proletarian struggle that precedes the intervention, while in the war of occupation the initial question is an inter-bourgeois confrontation.

That being said, in one or the other moment of the imperialist war, what is decisive is not the confrontation between two armies on a front line or in defense of a frontier, but the development of a military operation aimed directly at the proletarians who live there. This aspect is not anecdotal, since it constitutes a qualitative change in the conditions of military operations, of war, vanishing thus all distinction between "the front line" and "the home front", permanently targeting the whole occupied territory, **attacking the proletarians directly in their daily life and in their homes**, what determines them to react.

In this scenario, where the army of occupation affirms itself as the direct enemy facing our class, the one in charge of imposing its subjection to capitalist exploitation, controlling its movements, exercising repression, destroying its homes, systematizing rapes, tortures, killings, etc., **revolutionary defeatism starts, in the first place, from the struggle against that army**, placing itself unquestionably in the struggle against "its" own bourgeoisie.

There is a vast and rich historical experience of our class in this sense that has been systematically denigrated, distorted and hidden under the blanket of inter-bourgeois warfare, denouncing any kind of practice of confrontation of the proletariat to the army of occupation under the false pretext of national liberation struggle. We are referring,

for example, to the proletarian struggle of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in all America against the Spanish, English, Portuguese armies...; in the East and Middle East against the English and Ottoman armies; in China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century against the presence of the English, French and German armies – Taiping and Boxer revolts; in the Philippines (from 1898 to 1913) against the presence of American troops, in Brazil (Canudo revolt, to take just one example), in India, in Africa (for example, the Herero revolt), and, most especially, to the struggles that embraced the world after 1945 (Asia, Black Africa and the Maghreb, Latin America). Filed away in the little box of “national liberation struggles” these confrontations were scorned as being inter-bourgeois conflicts<sup>4</sup>.

The commonly accepted opinion is that these struggles responded exclusively to internal struggles within the ruling class to control those territories, an opinion above all spread by the world bourgeoisie and its main agents of indoctrination: media, historians, universities, intellectuals... Of course, the entire broad leftist and ultra-leftist spectrum **seized on that vision of the world to trap our class in the struggle for national liberation**. In this regard, perspectives in favor or against national liberation were opposed, but both visions played into the hands of the bourgeois framing of those struggles that tried to trap them in that false choice. Ultimately, both gave cover to the imperialist war against our struggle, and, to the great relief of their counterrevolutionary positions, it ended up sooner or later (after having been terribly repressed) integrated by a faction of the local bourgeoisie, which comforted them in their lamentable points of view.

Apart from other social-democratic conceptions reproduced by the wide range of leftist groupings, a decisive aspect that prevents perceiving the proletarian nature of these struggles is the ideological separation between “developed countries” and “under-developed countries”, or more subtly, “central countries” and “peripheral countries”. While some did not go so far to assert that the proletariat was an insignificant force in these regions, due to a supposed underdevelopment of capital, those who asserted that the decisive struggles had to start from the central countries did not miss to endorse this

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<sup>4</sup> We can apply this observation to the proletarian “resistance” (without capital letter) during the period 1939-45, for example, against the German occupying army (or Italian as in Greece, in Albania), whether in France, Serbia, Greece, Russia. A question that is resolved in two jumps: it would only be a clash between two bourgeois camps, which is above all an insult to all the proletarians who refused to be controlled, exploited and massacred by these armies of occupation and the local bourgeoisie, very zealous in its solidarity with this army of repression. Here too, leftist sects of all kinds are incapable of seeing the real proletariat and its struggle, in these terrible conditions, after the gigantic massacre and repression of the years 1917-23, for it did not develop according to the classical pattern of “proletarian struggle” and “revolutionary defeatism” which dominates their brains and which they have shoehorned into future generations as an immovable dogma. Once again, they build reality on the basis of the final framing that the bourgeoisie managed to impose, reducing the events to a single mush: in France, for example, the Resistance with a capital R, controlled and institutionalized by the French State through the PCF and the FFL, as if there had been no... proletarian resistance!

conception. Everything that was happening in Asia, Africa, etc. could have no other horizon than that of a nationalist struggle where the proletariat served as cannon fodder. Their point of reference was Europe and a mythologized image of the industrial worker, prey to progress, developmentalism and workerism<sup>5</sup>.

Our position in this regard is clear – in most of the struggles labeled as “national liberation” one can trace a proletariat that tries to defend its material living conditions, to fight against exploitation and the needs of valorization, which are managed by the army of occupation that assumes the function of “its” own bourgeoisie. This is the only possible path for the proletarian struggle in these conditions and, consequently, for the development of revolutionary defeatism: the struggle against “its” own bourgeoisie, by striking counter-terror blows, organizing and structuring combat units which organize themselves as guerrillas and armed groups, attacking in their homes the leaders of the repression and their collaborators, sabotaging the enemy’s supplies, etc.

The decomposition of the occupying army and the fraternization comes precisely from the determination of the attacks of the proletariat against that army, **mercilessly attacking the proletarians in uniform who accept to continue killing**, torturing, raping and repressing. It is in this scenario and in the organizational tasks it demands, that the contradictions within the army of occupation are sharpened to destroy it, creating complicities and fraternizations with the enemy soldiers who break with “their own” camp.

To confuse the struggle of the proletariat against the army of occupation with national liberation, as “simplistic defeatism” does, objectively contributes to the isolation, disarmament and channeling of its struggle<sup>6</sup>. The calls of this “defeatism” are opposed to this elementary struggle of the proletariat against “its” own bourgeoisie and to the tasks related to it, calling without blushing to “fraternize” with its “brothers in uniform” who torture, humiliate, rape and slaughter our class. The determined action of the proletariat against the forces that repress it is placed in the imperialist game when in fact it is precisely the only real practice of defeatism. As in the war of fronts, what is

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<sup>5</sup> Even militants like Ngo Van, who have left us invaluable materials on the activity of our class in that “periphery” – let’s just mention “*Revolution and counterrevolution under colonial rule*” or “*In the country of the cracked bell*” – also reproduce the social-democratic vision that looks for the proletariat in the industrial concentrations. This explains why in the review *Informations et Correspondances Ouvrières* (ICO), in which he actively participated since its foundation, the articles he wrote refer to the workers’ strikes in the cities, particularly in Saigon, in 1964 and 1970, limiting themselves to “workers” events.

<sup>6</sup> Some try to combine a level of abstraction, where only concepts that become autonomous and detached from the reality come into play, with a more precise analysis of the ongoing conflicts, where the proletariat is removed (since “everything is capital”) and has to be “reinjecting” in a pure form, as they would like to see it, which is easier and does not require looking for it where it is, i.e. fighting and confronting “its” own bourgeoisie. This way, they avoid having to confront their comfortable ideology with the dynamic and contradictory reality.

decisive in this defeatist practice is the intransigence of the proletarians in struggle, that is to say, intransigence in their opposition to the army of occupation, but also against the faction of the local bourgeoisie which seeks to absorb their energy in a front of national liberation. Hence the dissemination of mottos and written propaganda denouncing the role of the occupying army, as well as the local bourgeois attempts to channel the proletarian response, encouraging disobedience and desertion, as well as fraternization among the draft evaders, are a decisive part of the development of the class struggle.

## VII/

The terrain of armed opposition is never based on technical and strictly military superiority, so as to be able to engage in an “apparatus against apparatus”, “army against army” confrontation. The real content of the struggle is never guaranteed simply by the armament (certainly indispensable) of the proletariat, or by the particular form adopted by the armed proletariat. While armed confrontation against the soldiers who fulfill their function as armed forces of the bourgeoisie is unavoidable, this reality eludes the fronts. The proletariat organizes itself as armed detachments, guerrillas, whose main characteristic, as opposed to *apparatus guerrilla*, is their mobility, the centralization of their direction (rather than the autonomy and dispersion of each detachment), as well as their unity with the “home front”. It tries to focus its attacks where the enemy does not expect it, it tries to avoid direct combat when the enemy is superior; it avoids resistance at permanent points, it uses dispersion against the enemy’s advance and concentration only to strike when nobody expects it; it carries out selective operations to liquidate leaders of the repression. His own way of proceeding against the enemy, by mercilessly liquidating officers and soldiers known for their cruelty, and developing defeatist propaganda among the rest of the captured soldiers, contributes to break the coherence of this repressive body and enhances its decomposition. What is thus encouraged is the action of proletarians who refuse to carry out orders, who desert, who turn their weapons against their own officers, refusing to serve as cannon fodder or as executioners of their own class brothers in the struggle, thus advancing forward the revolutionary process in all the bourgeois camps.

## VIII/

For the bourgeoisie it is always a question of transforming the social war into inter-bourgeois war, either by the crushing and physical elimination of the proletariat in struggle or/and by its channeling, that is to say, by the framing of the proletariat

through a process that liquidates the various degrees of autonomy reached by the proletariat and leads it to an inter-classist front. Using the qualification of a defensive war against the invader, of a nation under attack against the aggressor, of an oppressed nation against imperialism, as well as a long series of justifications, it is a question of leading the proletariat to a war between factions of the ruling class. In historical situations where the proletariat resists the siren songs of the bourgeoisie, and the international balance of forces threatens the existing order, social peace appears as a horizon on which to divide and cement the defeat of the proletariat. The Brest-Litovsk peace is one of the most illustrative examples<sup>7</sup>.

But it is the banner of national liberation that has become a great bulwark against revolutionary defeatism, especially when there is a confrontation against an army of occupation. The bourgeoisie uses it to divert the struggle of our class towards its factional interests in the world market, that is, as a way of appropriating the local management of capitalist exploitation.

This process of framing is supported by the various limits contained in the autonomy of our class, a place where nefarious concessions to the local bourgeoisie are proliferating, which pave the way for the formation of a **national front where our class goes astray**. This reality becomes evident when the antagonism between classes, which tends to delimit the borders of the struggle, is blurred under the pressure of the ideology championed by the local bourgeoisie in order to push the proletarians to kill each other for interests alien to their own.

While in defeatism in the midst of the war of fronts this practice of channeling our movement is expressed through a renewal of the local bourgeoisie, which presents itself as part of the defeatist movement of the proletariat, in the war of occupation it always manifests itself as the construction of an inter-classist front that consolidates the figure of a national army against the army of occupation, regardless of the argument on which the cohesion is built (national defense, religion, culture...). Its materialization is achieved by consolidating a fictitious community of interests of the local bourgeoisie with "its" proletarians, a community built with an identification around the nation, people, territory, culture, religion, ethnicity, language, or any other particular aspect on which that fiction can be ideologically sustained. Class antagonism suffers an idyllic abstraction that in its real materialization means the integration of the proletariat in the imperialist war.

As people would have us believe, **there is no polarization between imperialism and national liberation**, since national liberation is an integral part of imperialism.

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<sup>7</sup> Capitalist peace and war are but two moments of the permanent war waged by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

The imperialist logic of capital (inherent in every particle of value it contains) is what gives coherence to the different bourgeois factions in the international struggle for the distribution of the productive forces of the planet. National liberation, concretized under various fictitious identities, is nothing other than the mechanism used by the local bourgeoisie to mobilize the proletariat in defense of its factional interests.

The process by which the proletariat renounces the defense of its material interests, and allows itself to be trapped in the inter-imperialist networks, turns the exploited into cannon fodder, and in all cases the situation reverts to an inter-bourgeois war of fronts, even if it is combined with the deployment of the army of occupation. The affirmation of the imperialist war is confirmed by the crushing and liquidation of the proletariat, which can only reverse this reality by the rupture of this interclass unity through the re-emergence of revolutionary defeatism, as a response to the brutal conditions of direct exploitation which are managed by the various bourgeoisies (army of occupation, army or militias of the local bourgeoisie...). Only with the revival of that perspective the proletariat is again opposing the sacrifices of national unity, when attacking the proletarians in uniform who continue to kill them from both sides, when responding and attacking all the bourgeois factions that directly organize their exploitation, especially the various political-military leaders. Out of that perspective they are digging their own grave for the enhanced reproduction of capital.

The revolutionary minorities, as an active and dynamic part of the defeatist perspective, not only encourage, but also organize the diverse tasks required. Among these tasks, it is also essential to investigate historically on the experiences of affirmation of defeatism, on how it was possible to dissolve the different degrees of class autonomy in favor of a faction of capital, highlighting the process that goes from one to another and, in this process, highlighting the moments where the highest levels of class autonomy are reached, as well as the moments in which the proletariat yields to its enemy and allows the counterrevolution to bring it back under its control. This task of reappropriation of its own historical action provides precise guidelines for the international action of the proletariat on the basis of its own experience, delimiting with greater clarity the class borders.

## IX/

The great concern of the bourgeoisie, after successive historical experiences, is to armor its army against revolutionary defeatism, which decomposes its armed organization. Hence the type of recruitment by which an army is constituted (conscription, volunteering, mercenarism... and their mixed combinations) is not a trivial matter, since this aspect decisively conditions the forms adopted by revolutionary defeatism.

If we have to differentiate the different types of military recruitment, we have to point out that the world bourgeoisie has been learning since long time from the lessons of history, correcting constitutive aspects of its armies to address the factors that promote indiscipline and the questioning of the military order in a context where contradictions tend to surface. The example of Vietnam in the 1960s was taken very seriously, when the most powerful army on the planet suffered a terrible process of decomposition with tens of thousands of soldiers deserting and organizing against their own officers, bringing the war home with revolts in the US (Watts, etc.). The “mistake” of the US in sending hundreds of thousands of soldiers to war, enlisted as part of the draft, became crucial when a large percentage of Black people in uniform in its army – an army that reproduces the racism of society – identified with the proletarians who in Vietnam were abjectly treated as *gooks*<sup>8</sup>. That’s why, for a long time, the ruling class has been striving to recruit and select the troops sent to the front under criteria that hinder any identification and fraternization with the “enemy”, from language and culture to the personal background of each recruit. At the same time, mainly throughout the USA, and to a lesser extent France (Maghreb, Africa), England (India, Burma, Malaysia), world capitalism has developed and perfected the principle of warfare led first by special troops (in Vietnam, appearance of the Green Berets, Rangers, Lurps, Sayeret, SRR...), trained to carry out swift operations, to outflank enemy troops and supervise the enlisted soldiers as part of recruitment to transform them into killing machines. Obviously, the implementation of these measures contains insurmountable limits, determined by the necessities of the development of the war, which oblige the bourgeoisie to hire “dangerous” military recruits, for example, when it is forced to resort to compulsory and massive conscription.

Hence, the type of recruitment indicates a given bourgeois tactic, its room for maneuver and the material position of the proletarian in uniform. It influences the cohesion of the troops, the capacity to assume the intervention, to kill and to die, the possible resistance to the risks of demoralization, demobilization or even decomposition. It is not difficult to understand therefore that the defeatist practice assumes different materializations based on the type of recruitment that cannot be ignored.

## X/

The breakthrough and development of revolutionary defeatism is always strongly marked by the international balance of forces. This is notoriously evident in the context

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<sup>8</sup> We must note that, obviously, this defeatism was determined by the wave of international struggles of the 60s and 70s, and this type of recruitment only helped these struggles to explode within the army.



of localized imperialist war, where a balance unfavorable to our class allows the isolation of the proletarians in struggle. There is no doubt that the various struggles and defeatist moments, however impressive, break away from the revolutionary perspective if there is no rupture with isolation. Trapped in the sanitary cordons established by the bourgeoisie, the result is always the same: defeat. This usually results in a massacre perpetrated by the world State on the ground, or in the neutralization and channeling of the movement. Therefore, revolutionary defeatism only reaches its realization as an expansive movement, as a **revolutionary war of the world proletariat**, that is to say, as an international articulation of the struggle against “the own” bourgeoisie of the proletariat of the various countries.

Although the variation of the balance of forces and the break with isolation can occur due to the drive and the determination that defeatism reaches in the countries where the localized war is concentrated, bringing the contradiction to all the armies in action... nevertheless, the weight of the class struggle developed in the countries that send their armies, becomes an issue of prime importance. The cohesion and social peace in the “home front” allows these armies to disregard the social order in their territories and deploy their forces in other regions. On the contrary, the questioning and rupture of social peace behind their backs not only tend to force these armies of occupation to go “back home”, in order not to be swept away in the “home front”, but also weakens their own cohesion. That’s why revolutionary defeatism, once again, expresses itself in that situation and in those countries, in the struggle against “its” own bourgeoisie, against “its” own State. The calls for “defeatism” that do not start from this essential question remain a recipe for impotence, contemplation and idealism.

There is no perspective of social transformation without the generalization of the proletarian struggle. Historical experience is a verification of this invariable determination in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie: every insurrectionary process which confines itself to a city, a country or a region tends inevitably to give way. Capital cannot be destroyed in this or that place, but in the entire planet from which the social reproduction of this society results, and for this it is necessary to destroy bourgeois power everywhere. Hence internationalism is not a “principle” to which revolutionary minorities subscribe, but the very content of the proletarian struggle.

Therefore, although the struggle of the proletariat is synthesized in the struggle against the bourgeoisie in front of it, fighting the various agents it deploys to reproduce capitalist society, it is in **the organization and international centralization of this community of struggle against “its” own bourgeoisie that the decisive question is played out**, which can pave the way for the world revolution. The revolutionary minorities see their action from this perspective, not only in terms of defeatist action, but in

any daily struggle of the proletariat. Therein lays the very process of the constitution of the proletariat as a class, as a world party for the destruction of the existing social order.

Thus, revolutionary minorities are not interpreters or chroniclers of reality. Nor do they seek “theoretical agreements” in order to act jointly. What characterizes the communist minorities is, independently of how they call themselves, to assume the diverse expressions of the struggle as one and the same international community of struggle against Capital and the State, by putting all their efforts and passion into **structuring, organizing and centralizing the tasks** that it requires. It’s in this approach, which implies an implacable critique of reformism, activism, theoreticism, centrism... – in other words, of the various social democratic forces that undermine our community of struggle – that the discussion and programmatic deepening, as well as the delimitation between revolution and counterrevolution, is affirmed as a genuine revolutionary praxis. On this terrain of the struggle, of confrontation, but also of comradeship and life, we urge revolutionary militants and groups to centralize their efforts with ours in the organization of revolutionary defeatism, and in general, in the organization of all the tasks required by the community of struggle against capital, taking into account, of course, what the current context allows us to do in terms of capacities and possibilities.

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