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We are not “anti”

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This version is from The Charnel-House, translated from French by Jack Bellone with a shortened introduction

Amadeo Bordiga once famously quipped that the worst product of fascism, politically speaking, was anti-fascism. The same could also probably be said of imperialism, only substituting anti-imperialism for anti-fascism. Nothing is worse than anti-fascists who call for communists to bloc with the Democrats in a popular front against the fascist scourge of Trump. Except, maybe, going to some anti-war march to see anti-imperialists waving around placards with Bashar al-Assad's face on them. So it goes, more or less, down the line: anti-nationalism, anti-Zionism, anti-Stalinism, anti-globalization, etc. While such prefixes may serve as a convenient shorthand indicating opposition to a given feature of the social totality, as part of the overall effort to overcome that totality, to fixate upon one or another facet of capitalist society as the ultimate evil and prioritize it above all others is at once short-sighted and one-sided.

We are not “anti.” That is to say, we are not against extreme forms of exploitation, oppression, war, or other horrors. Being “anti” means to *choose* a particularly unbearable point and attempt to constitute an alliance against this aspect of the capitalist Real.

Not being “anti” does not mean to be a maximalist and proclaim, without rhyme or reason, that one is for total revolution and that, short of that, there is only reformism. Rather, it means that when one opposes capital in a given situation, one doesn't counterpose to it a “good” capital. A demand, a refusal poses nothing other than what it is: to struggle against raising the age of retirement is not to promote the better administration of direct or socialized wages. To struggle against restructuration is not to be anti-liberal; it is to oppose these measures here and now, and it is no coincidence that struggles can surpass themselves in this way. We're neither anti-this nor anti-that. Nor are we “radical.” We pose the necessity of communization in the course of immediate struggles because the non-immediate perspective of communization can serve as the self-critical analytic frame of struggles, as such, for the historical production of the overcoming of capital.

If anti-liberalism, or at least anti-ultraliberalism – which currently [2005] constitutes a national union, a nearly total frontism – furnishes a blinding example of how the “anti” approach permits position within a front, then it is organized along the lines of “Attac” [Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions and Aid to Citizens] or something more informal. The archetype of this attitude is anti-fascism: first the ideology of popular fronts in Spain and France, then the flag uniting the Russo-Anglo-Saxon military coalition against the Germano-Japanese axis. Anti-

fascism had a very long life, since it was the official ideology of Western democratic states as well as Eastern socialist states up to the fall of the [Berlin] Wall in 1989.

Besides anti-fascism there was anti-colonialism, an ideology combining socialism and nationalism within the tripartite world of the Cold War. This structuring ideology of the aptly-named national liberation fronts placed the struggles of colonized proletarians alongside those of local bourgeois elements under the political and military direction of the autochthonous bureaucratic layers produced by colonial administrations. Anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism were also the frame for the alliance of bureaucratic-democratic revolutionaries with the socialist camp. Such ideologies have then always functioned as state ideology (existent or constituent) in the context of confrontations and wars, global and local, between the different poles of capitalist accumulation. In the metropoles anti-imperialism was, with anti-fascism, an essential element for communist parties after the Second World War, presented as the defense of the socialist fatherland and the "peace camp." It articulated the conflict-ridden day-to-day management of exploitation with capital in a global perspective where socialism remained on the offensive. Anti-imperialism has been, and to a certain extent remains, a framework of mobilization intrinsically linked to and for war.

Anti-racism, brother of anti-fascism, is now another state ideology which accompanies and absolves the massive and practical state racism that has developed in France since capital's entrance into open crisis in the 1970s. The anti-worker politics of capitalist restructuring "racialized" a set of workers, first by dividing them into "French" and "immigrants," then by further "ethnicization" and so-called "communitarianism" [*communautarisme*]. This situation puts anti-racism in an untenable position. If it is shown the "little blacks" have displayed racism against the "little whites" (just returns which reap the whirlwind), the anti-racists will have in any case already told us that this wasn't racism but social resentment! Marvelous imbecility that, which thinks racism is biological. It will always be true that anti-racism holds its own as well as racism without ever putting a stop to it. During the great struggles of 1995 or 2003, [Jean-Marie] Le Pen disappeared from the landscape and we barely even remember his existence. This was not the result of anti-racism.

Returning to anti-liberalism: In England and the US, no one hesitates to call this anti-capitalism. "Capitalism" here is understood as the mere fact of multinational [corporations], whose practical politics are denounced as strangling the southern countries, destroying their economies (cf. Argentina) and agriculture in particular, massacring terrestrial ecosystems, putting workers of the metropoles in competition with those of "emerging" countries, practicing a "social dumping" which precarizes them, flexibilizes them, and makes them into poor workers. Against such politics one opposes the Tobin Tax, fair trade, "food sovereignty," guaranteed income, global democratic regulation, economic solidarity. This is what qualifies the paraphernalia of anti-liberalism as anti-capitalist. Faced with all this, what can be said? That true anti-capitalism is something else, postulating communization? Saying this would obviously be irrelevant, since in the framework of "anti" there is always a race to find the one true anti. Even more vain that this anti-capitalism is the true anti-capitalism which federates the front anti-isms have put into place.

Among the antis which circulate we find anti-Zionism, for a while now. What does it mean? Historically the parties and theoreticians opposed to Zionism have been Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian workers' parties and their various leaders: [Leon] Trotsky, [Vladimir] Medem, [Vladimir] Lenin, and [Rosa] Luxemburg. The struggle against tsarism and anti-Semitism in the resistance to quotidian exploitation of a miserable and oppressed Jewish proletariat, regularly the target of pogroms

set up by the secret police, had given birth to two currents in the Jewish workers' movement. One was internationalist and autonomist on the cultural plane (promoting Yiddish), the principle organization of which was the Bund (Jewish Labor Bund of Russia and Poland) with [Vladimir] Medem. Despite numerous conflicts and a period of scission, it was basically the Jewish branch of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. The other current was Zionist, the principal organization of which was Poale Zion (Workers of Zion) with [Ber] Borochov, founder of socialist Zionism, who proclaimed that the liberation of the Jews was impossible in the diaspora and that it was necessary to create a Jewish socialist state in Palestine. The Bund violently combatted the organs of Zionist ideology and proclaimed anti-Semitism could only be defeated by socialism. Simultaneously it charged Zionism with deserting the real struggle, with promoting an impossible solution that even attacked true Jewish culture, Yiddish, the culture of a people in the midst of other peoples in Europe and nowhere else. It is this Jewish opposition to Zionism that can logically be described as anti-Zionism. Arab opposition to Jewish colonization in Palestine and the British Mandate is opposed to this colonization and not really Zionism, which would require opposing to it another objective responding to the causes that produce it (as we have seen with the Bund). Thereafter Palestinian nationalist organizations have refused to call the state of Israel by its name, qualifying it as the "Zionist entity" so as to not recognize an established fact. This, too, has nothing to do with Zionism. Even if, in fact, their enemies call themselves Zionists – it's rather natural for Palestinians to say they are anti-Zionists – this was a posture that allowed it to connect (symbolically, after the genocide) up with Jewish revolutionary movements, and thus claim a position at the same time anti-colonialist, [a project] of national liberation and "progressivism" adequate to the restructuring of the world by the Cold War.

For that matter, anti-Zionism has become a euphemism for anti-Semitism, insofar as the denunciation of Israel's pro-US imperialist character combines easily with the denunciation of the "dictatorship of the market," of Wall Street, now center of "liberal globalization," enemy of the people, within which the "Zionist lobby" is the new name of Jewish international finance. It is striking to see how, in the context of anti-globalization, the old anti-Semitic clichés receive a facelift!

In either case, we are not more anti-Zionist than anti-imperialist or even anti-war. Opposing the war *can*, in a specific situation, be the first moment of a proletarian movement overcoming itself in struggle against the capitalist state, which triggers or undertakes a war to maintain itself. But pacifist movements follow the market into war. The world movement against the war in Iraq is the last example.

For our part, we aren't anti-anything. We are pro-communization, which is not to be more radically anti-one thing rather than another – anti-alienation or anti-work, for example.

We are pro-communization in the struggles which exist now against the offensive pursued by capital, against the restructuring which is presently accomplished but continuously pursued all the same, because its very specificity is to abolish fixity and therefore remain definitively unachieved until capital is achieved. We oppose here and now anti-salary measures. Opposing exploitation and its aggravation is not anti-capitalism, nor even communizationism [*communisationnisme*]. It is to be present in the class struggle, in the movement of practical and theoretical production of surpassing. Not in order to say "one sole solution, communization," but to ensure that anti-work politics is posed, even in a very minoritarian manner, as a necessary consequence of capital and not an arbitrary choice dictated of the "ayatollahs of liberal ideology" (fortunately this necessity more and more audible). Every definition of a

current as “anti” prevents its self-seizure as a dynamic element of surpassing. It is necessary to seize one’s adversary as unable not to be. Overcoming is one of the courses of the struggle of capital and the proletariat in their unity; it is the overcoming of the two by the proletariat. Every “anti” definition moves within the antinomies of capital, since to be “anti” is always to promote an *existing* opposed element, or what appears to exist as an immediate potentiality, as “alter-globalization” or even proletarian autonomy. Not only does this not put it in view of an overcoming, but it poses a strategy (i.e., steps) to arrive at its goal. Every promotion of an actually existing element operates on the historic model of the worker program, which affirms class as it is, as well as work as it is, by asking itself only how much it can be reduced in putting everyone to work. Now, and this is new, is making certain aspects of struggle emerge which seem to indicate the sense of overcoming a promotion of an existing element leading to a strategy?

If, in Argentina, the proletarian question is posed even at the heart of what can be qualified as self-management struggles, emphasizing it does not mean promoting an element of this society; it is not then elaborating a strategy. To emphasize the formation of a *gap* in the counterrevolutionary sealing off of struggles is also part of this gap which indicates overcoming, the existence of a communizing current capable of detecting these elements. The whole course of capital, which currently tends to no longer seal off its cycle in the reproduction of classes, indicates also an overcoming in crisis, and the end of the current cycle of accumulation.

To be against is not to be “anti.” To struggle against restructuring that aggravates exploitation is not to be anti-restructuring, which would mean saying restructuring could *not* be pursued. Anti-nuclears prove in a most caricatured fashion that to be “anti” is to promote other existing elements (other energies, other consumptions), which is totally different than opposing the construction of reactors and everything that implies: destruction, militarization of space, and pollution ad *vitam eternum*.

In the course of struggles we are opposed to anti-capitalism, to anti-fascism, to anti-racism, to anti-Zionism: the essential complements of communitarianism [*communautarismes*]. But we will not therefore be anti-communitarians [*communautaristes*], anti-democratic, *nor even,* and maybe even above all, anti-citizenist*. Opposed to socialization and wanting the abolition of society we are positive, we are only for communism.