

**Against the Holy Family of capital, we defend  
our lives by means of social antagonism**

Grupo Barbaria

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# Contents

National unity? In defense of whom? . . . . .	3
Security or nihilism? . . . . .	5
Fictitious capital and bourgeois plans . . . . .	7

*In this article we intend to tackle the questions that are unpinned by the current state of emergency that was decreed by the Pedro Sánchez administration in Spain, along with the measures that were announced on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. We are living in times of profound social crisis, a health crisis that, at the same, is combined with an economic crisis, of change in the climate, psychology, politics, etc. In reality we're facing the crisis of a world that's beginning to collapse, that's exhausting its historical time: it's the world of capital. It's the crisis of capital.*

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## **National unity? In defense of whom?**

We're told that the sickness and the contagion pay no heed to classes, ideologies, races, that it attacks all equally and we need to respond together, with unity, with social discipline, as spaniards, because we're members of a great nation. All the political parties are united. Beyond the shades of differences for the necessities of political marketing, unions, businessmen and banks defend the measures of the government.

All together, because we are in the same boat, our homeland, against a common enemy, the coronavirus. It will not defeat us, they tell us. At the end of these months everything will return to the presumed normality of before, to the normality of capital. Pedro Sánchez repeats obsessively, on a regular basis, that this is just a temporary crisis.

The bourgeoisie are frightened.

They are in fear.

And for good reason.

Furthermore they act in a divided manner according to the location. There are governments that tardily took centralized decisions, as did Chinese capital, and others like Italy or Spain that took even longer to react and impose partial isolation on the populations. They are reacting late to the diffusion of the sickness because what really worries them, as we will explain later, is the health of the capitalist economy. In France the measures are much more recent. They didn't even halt the municipal elections on Sunday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, and in the United Kingdom and the United States it seems like they're betting on a Malthusian solution, that's to say, let whoever must die, die (though they will probably have to make a reversal). Meanwhile the virus spreads around the world, and it arrives to Latin America and Africa. The virus propagates at the same speed as the circulation of commodities and capital.

We have all been able to see the contradictions that the state of emergency of the PSOE-Podemos coalition government is heading into. They tell us that what they are worried about is the health of the people and, nevertheless, millions of people go to work every day. The fact of the matter is that the necessities of capital are those that mark the necessities of the society in which we live. The utility of a thing comes marked by its price, by the economic profitability that it generates for the businesses. There is no human utility in manufacturing cars, but there is a social utility that reigns above all, that of capital. If cars are not manufactured, the profits of those businesses diminish and they are forced to close up. That increases the unemployment and the difficulty for proletarians obliged to reproduce their labor power and their lives

What do we want to emphasize with this? That we live in a world dominated by capital and by value. And this pertains absolutely to the form in which the crisis in course is being met. When

we say that capital is the root of the crisis we're not saying something superficial. What we affirm is that the impersonal machine that is value is that which, with its omnivorous logic, fosters the birth of increasingly more virus, through its tendency to colonize more and more corners of the planet and by how it develops the intensive meat industry. At the same time, it confronts the expansion of these epidemics from the angle of its own logic, which is why it tries to maintain, as much as possible, the skeleton of the production and reproduction of economic activities.

What would be an adequate form of protecting ourselves against this kind of virus? Trying to drastically reduce the social production, to put an end to these limitless megalopolis that are cities today, a consumption management that fulfills the basic human necessities, the end of school as an instrument of indoctrination and of social discipline, the end of people's subjection to machines, the abolition of businesses, etc. We are enumerating some of the measures established by the immediate revolutionary Program that was developed by Bordiga in the meeting at Forlì of 1952, measures to apply during the revolutionary process for the transition towards integral communism. They are what we as humanity need to apply in order to confront not only the crisis of coronavirus, but more generally the ever more brutal catastrophe that the exhaustion of capitalism pushes us towards. Ultimately it has to do with measures that detain social mobility, meaning the mobility of capital and commodities. A plan in defense of the species is needed: this plan, this program in defense of the species, as well as the real movement that tends to impose it by abolishing the present state of things, is what we call communism.

Capital is incapable of that because its social substance, that which gives it life, is abstract labor, wage labor. This is another lesson that we can surely take from this experience. Without wage labor the functionality of the businesses is ruptured, the economic activities collapse, the society decomposes. Capital is no more than value inflated with value, that is to say, money that is transformed into more money by means of abstract labor, which is the social substance that gives equivalence to all the commodities amongst themselves. This conclusion is also very important because it helps us to extract a new conclusion: what's imperative is the abolition of wage labor, that of a society that revolves around activities which, from a human perspective, lack sense, but are necessary in order to breathe life into the impersonal and global zombie that is capital today.

From there we can be sure that the virus is not a "black swan", as the strategists and economists of capital sustain. Meaning, it's not a foreign element that attacks a system that would be in good health. It's a virus that is fostered by the very dynamic of capital (like others that have come before and are to come) and which moves at the velocity of the circulation of capital. This is very important to understand the opposition and the firm antagonism that we must have, facing all the ideological discourses that the governments try to sell us, when they say we're all in the same boat.

It never has been and never will be so. We live in a society that is overrun with social antagonisms, where the interests of capital and its maximization of benefits are opposed to those of us who must sell our labor power in order to survive, and who find ourselves suspended in the air if someone doesn't "buy" our labor power, always reduced to gears in the impersonal capitalist machinery, our human needs commodified. Therefore, yes, we are talking about antagonism between the proletariat and capital. It is from the perspective of this antagonism that we need to defend our human needs.

They never tire of saying that this is a war and we have to be united. It's the same strategy that is used in all of the imperialist wars. It's the strategy of turning us as proletarians into cannon fodder in the defense of their interests, of the interests of capital. In this crisis, what Marx said

can be perfectly seen: governments are no more than “the general administrative commission of capital”. It’s the function that determines the organ and, in this case, its function is to allow the respiration not of people, but of capital and its movements, movements that are giving signs of a dangerous paralysis. That’s why they are frightened.

As we have said, their strategy is to turn us into cannon fodder, as they did with our proletarian brothers in other wars, in the name of national unity, the struggle for a greater good (that of capital) and the promise of victory against the presumed enemy (in this case the coronavirus).

In the name of this Holy Family, this national unity, hundreds of thousands of workers are working in call centers, factories, offices or supermarkets, crowded into public transport, trapped on highways, or in rows of tables and chairs, with hardly any space, where they continue to be obliged to subject themselves and exercise the productivity due to capital. And we already know that this society offers just two alternatives: either get sick or be thrown out to the street and go back to being suspended in the air.

And what to say about the Foreign Detention Centers, which thousands of proletarians from other countries are stuffed into for the crime of wanting to improve their lives, or about the prisoners in the jails, that live their lives in confinement (and not just for a few weeks), crowded in wait for the contagion to spread to them.

In other words the unity that is proclaimed is no more than the handcuffs that shackle us to some interests that are not our own and to a boat (capital) that is beginning to sink.

That’s why the struggles that have broken out in the factories such as Mercedes in Vitoria, Iveco or Renault in Valladolid, or the riots like in the Foreign Detention Center of Aluche in Madrid and the ones happening in other struggles that have already broken out in other factories in Italy, are so important. We’re not cannon fodder for capital. This supposition, the defense of our human necessities, is a fundamental premise for the future. And the thing is that the future that we have in front of us is that of a catastrophe of ever more bestial proportions, provoked by the historical exhaustion of capitalism as a global and total system of dominion.

Something very different than what the governors of the left-wing of capital promise us. In one of his discourses in recent days, Pedro Sánchez repeated a thousand times that it’s just a temporary crisis, it’s just a temporary crisis... as if repeating it would help with anything. In reality this global pandemic is added to the more general crisis of value in the society of capital (the expulsion of living labor by the processes of automation and the general decline of the rate of profit), to the social revolts in course that protagonized 2019 and the climatic transformations underway. All this has a common vector, capital and its motions, a natural antagonist, the proletarian revolts in course; and a solution to which the course of the current story can be directed, communism as a life plan for the species, an adequate distribution that satisfies human needs outside of the homicidal logic of capital. We live in interesting times, historical times, of crisis and of catastrophe, of revolts and pandemics. On this horizon revolution becomes a necessity, a necessary instrument that connects the immediate defense of our necessities with the historical objective of a human community that satisfies the ensemble of its needs, denied by capital.

## **Security or nihilism?**

This kind of virus, so contagious, is fought with isolation. We have already explained that this isolation goes against the essence of capital, of its perpetual and infinite movement of production

and incessant circulation of commodities. The State tries to realize that partial paralysis of mobility through its instruments: the army, the police, the fines, the punishments and the threats. In these days of state of emergency we're experiencing one of the dreams of capital, the dream of its origins, which in reality represents that of its twilight: the war of all against all in the natural state, that obliges us to subject ourselves to a sovereign because of the social hollowing and the common fear, a securitarian Leviathan. The social isolation, the atomization of molecules closed up in homes separated from each other, this social hollowing is filled by the State, which wants to convert itself into the heart and

blood vessels that unify the community. A fictitious community, without a life of its own beyond that which it tries to confer to the State with its mechanisms of security and of order, of social discipline and repression.

We're not defending, against the State and its order, against the state of alarm, an individualist nihilism where everyone does what they feel like independently from the common good of the community. This nihilism is no more than the other side of the coin of the fictitious community that is the State: individual atoms that move in all directions without a common aim, like headless chickens, and the State as the only way to construct a social order in which these atoms converge. Therefore it's a false dichotomy, in capital, that places order and freedom in opposition, like that what places democracy and totalitarianism in opposition, or Spain and China.

Democracy is the social being of capital. In a world in which human beings are commodities, in which we have to sell our individual labor power, we compete against each other in order to obtain the highest profits for our particular commodity against other commodities. Our common being as proletarians, as a class, as a possible party that is born from the defense of our immediate and historical necessities, is blurred in the atomization of capitalist competition that furthermore reduces us to being juridical subjects, citizens, isolated from each other, that vote and once every so often, again, isolated. This is the social being of capital, that makes of the State the only possibility for a fictitious common being which, at the same time as it isolates us as human beings, connects us incessantly as commodities. This is again the big problem that capital has, in its internal exhaustion, in a crisis like this. It isolates us as people and human beings but it connects us as commodities. The movement of capital is that of people subordinated to the movements of things and of machines. Isolated from one another we only communicate through them, the things, in their form as commodity. This is what Marx referred to when he spoke of the fetishism of the commodity and of capital.

The coronavirus has placed a debate on the table about the political forms of the States to confront the crisis, advocating, in some cases, the management of more centralized States like China. For us, all these debates that differentiate in a substantial way between dictatorial and democratic regimes, from angle of political formality, between China and the western parliaments, are secondary. All the modern regimes are equally democratic and totalitarian. We live in a democratic totalitarianism that perfectly expresses the social character of capital, in its individual essence (as isolated atoms) and in the totalitarian tendency of which the State and the commodity invade our lives. And this is universal. It's a lesson that capitalism and its democracies learned from the fascisms after 1945, militarily defeated but victorious in some of their teachings with which they tried to breathe life into a capital in crisis.

As the comrades of Chuang say we're living in the middle of an inverted general strike. In contrast to a general strike we live live isolated, on account of the state of emergency, but we're all raising many questions, important questions. We're living in a cathartic moment. Why are

we closed in? Will it be for a long time? What will our future be like? Will my loved ones die? Why do they send me to work? What will happen to me if I become unemployed? What kind of world are we living in? Will it be something temporary? We can reply to some of these questions strongly, above all the last one: no, it's not a question of a temporary crisis. The world of capital, slowly but irreversibly, is falling down, is entering a state of collapse that isn't the one the ecologists and de-growthists have been selling. Capitalism will not disappear in its collapse, nor will it decomplexify, but in its all out catastrophe it threatens us with extinction if we aren't capable of putting an end to it and organizing a plan for the life of the species. All of the possibilities are placed in this direction. It's not a utopia. And at the same time, we're far, terms of consciousness, from this historical objective, from a horizon of possibility alternative to capitalism. We're materialists and not luminaries, we know that it's from the class struggles that have developed in the latest period and those that surely will come in the future, where this historical necessity and the possibility to invert the praxis of capital will be born. The praxis of capital is homicide, homicide of the living and of the dead.

## **Fictitious capital and bourgeois plans**

The crisis of the coronavirus accelerates and is linked to the more general crisis of capital. It's very important to understand this, facing the fiscal and monetary policies that the different european governments are implementing in order to halt the current economic paralysis.

The crisis provoked by the coronavirus invades the body of the patient, capital, which isn't exactly in good health, a chronically sick patient that has been worsening in health in the last decade. The origin of the sickness is an irreversible metastasis. The destiny is sure and certain: the death of capital from its historical exhaustion, by the exhaustion of value and of its social substance, work. The palliative treatments employed, the multiplication of fictitious capital, extend the life of the afflicted but burst in moments of crisis, as could be seen in the crisis of 2008 or currently in the movements of the global stock markets. And we're not calling them exaggerated, all to the contrary: we are simply anatomists of the necrology of capital. It's the WHO and many biologists who tell us, for example, that this virus is not the last, nor the most virulent that will come to threaten our lives in the coming historical period.

In this difficult context, the measures approved by the governments are but palliatives that intend to buy some time for the future, a time that is nevertheless increasingly shorter. All that while it's obsessively repeated that this is only a temporary crisis, a temporary crisis, a temporary crisis... As Pedro Sánchez tiresomely repeats. And we well know that it is not so, but that we are facing a supply crisis (as the bourgeois economists would say pedantically), meaning, a crisis due to the difficulty of the valorization of capital, to which is added the economic stoppage of recent weeks, that accelerates and amplifies this supply crisis. A crisis that a simple injection of liquidity, by means of central banks or fiscal spending policies will not provide an exit from, because the problem is the profits that the businesses are not generating during these weeks because of the paralysis of a large portion of the productive fabric. Obviously we are not affirming the immediate downfall of capital. Capitalism, in its twilight, still has a lot of steam. What we do affirm is that we are entering a new era, that of the exhaustion of capital as a social relation, an epoch marked increasingly more by the revolts of our class and the crisis of capital.

Returning to the measures of the Pedro Sánchez administration, in reality they are not so ambitious as they have been presented. 200 billion euros, of which 117 are public and 83 are private. As for the public resources, in reality, it's not a matter of money that the State directly invests, but that this will be presented as a mere guarantor in the case that the credits of the private companies are not payed, with which the intention is to avoid their bankruptcy. And that is the secret of the plan. In good measure, it's intended to mobilize credit in order to finance this period of paralysis of private economic activity. To the proletariat is promised a moratorium on mortgage payments and bills for the most vulnerable sectors (anyway they will still need to be payed) and, above all, the firing of workers is facilitated massively by means of temporary lay-offs, although the companies have enormous benefits. This is where the reformism of Podemos has arrived, to commit to celebrating the sending off of millions of workers into unemployment, with their income notably reduced, as a labor victory (with the approval, no less, of unions, bosses and banks).

And that's what we're talking about. About an attack on the living conditions of the proletariat. That's what Pedro Sánchez is talking about when he reaffirms the importance of social discipline. That will be the contents of this plan and of all the "extra social plans" that they promise us, talking about a chimerical Marshall Plan or a european reconstruction like that of the postwar era. Time is not reversible, the future of capital tends towards catastrophe. When we have overcome the virus, as they promise, nothing will be the same as before. Or better said, it will continue being so, the same capitalist catastrophe will continue but in an increased manner and further in crisis. The current strategies of securitization will be taken advantage of by the bourgeoisie, and they know that the immediate future all over the world will be one of social and urban revolts everywhere, as 2019 already anticipated. Many of the lay-offs will be permanent. The precarity of the workers will deepen. The social cutbacks will attempt to cover the increases in public and private debt.

The future will deliver us an increasingly sharpened social polarization. Two social blocs are drawn that represent two opposing modes of production and of life: capitalism and communism. It is up to us communists to defend, in theory and in practice, the communist perspective of the abolition of the commodity and of value, of States and of classes, a possibility that nestles with force in the irreversible crisis of capital. The growing social polarization will create the fertile terrain from which can be birthed the possibility of this plan for the species that will satisfy our human needs, and not those of the valorization of capital.

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