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Analysis of the International Situation

The Seventh Congress of the International of
Anarchist Federations

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well as attacking individual autonomy, there is also the proliferation of rules eroding the freedom of, mainly, women and sexual minorities. These rules, that in many cases are also accepted by self-styled secular sectors of society, signal the reaffirmation of a religious and conformist ethics. They also bring about a strengthening of patriarchy, which is opposed by the anarchists as are all forms of domination.

War against life

Capitalist production has led to the declaration of a war against life itself; a war that threatens the survival of the whole planet.

This is happening on two fronts. On the first, is the looting of resources, pollution and environmental devastation, the consequence of capitalist production. This system only considers profits, ignoring the fact that human beings are part of the ecosystem as well and that no one eats or breathes money. The other front is that of technological development following the agenda of the powers. On one side there is nuclear energy, whether civil or military, which can lead to a slow radioactive death or a devastating destruction. On the other, genetic manipulation colonizes life, looting traditional knowledges. The duty of anarchists is to side with those peoples fighting these aggressions.

Against moral order and religion

Every form of institutionalized belief is hierarchical and authoritarian, trying to impose its own moral rules on every person. Anarchists are strongly opposed to all such belief systems. Pretending to represent a non-existent monopoly on moral values, religions subtly try to interfere in individuals' private lives. Religions threaten their autonomy, denying their ability to directly solve their own problems. Those who believe in a heaven to come will not do anything to get better conditions now!!! Religion wars are still being fought in the name of a God, hiding ambitions of domination and conquest, very evident in the close relationships between churches and States. Anarchists oppose all religions: Christian, Muslim...and any others. Our deep consideration for personal freedom does not prevent us from opposing religious beliefs and any form of hierarchy. As

Permanent war as the paradigm of state and capitalist domination

Today the logic of domination and profit has the support of all the powers behind it, united only in their will to starve, humiliate and massacre the dispossessed classes. In addition, ideological mechanisms, the very same neoliberalism prevailing every where, are relatively secondary to the staging of a vicious fight to control and dominate, where the aims are immediate survival and the destruction of the enemy at any costs, even if that implies the destruction, in the short term, of the very possibility of life on the planet.

In recent years we have seen the reaffirmation of the paradigm of 'permanent war'. Emerging after the spectacular attacks on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers, it was perfected in the following period, defining a scheme that makes war a permanent feature of the political scene. The pretext for this war on terror has become the pivot of a warmongering politics aimed at asserting the 'right' of the strongest, even if in contraction of the feeble international law, bringing into disrepute any residual media use of the UN.

The permanent, preemptive, global war is but the latest way in which the domination of the strongest is secured, asserting the goals of those using, exploiting and oppressing the biggest part of the planet's population. These objectives are defined according to positions in a very obvious game, even if they are ignored on the propaganda side. The main one is the control of the energy resources (not only oil, but also water and the necessary minerals for satellite control technology, either civil or military) and of the infrastructure of supply and communication.

The war machinery used in the most strategic areas by North American interests guarantees that the USA maintains a primary role, on a purely economical level, in their competi-

tion with Europe, Japan, Russia, China and India, who do not have the military means or the autonomy required, to counter the hegemonic pretensions of Washington. A plausible consequence of this could be the reshaping of the ambitions of the historical allies of the USA, leading to rethinking of the relationship with the hawkish American administration.

European countries, in the past few years, have played the role, always more difficult and ambiguous, of allies-competitors of the United States and of their warmongering policies. Having neither an offensive military force, nor the capacity for effective political coordination, the European Union countries gravitate between the intention of making their own military pole and, the alliance, on a competitive ground, with the belligerent policy of the USA.

Italy has left behind the non-interventionist role typical of the Christian-Democrat period and that of supporter of Anglo-American imperialism, which was implied in its mediation between it and the Arab world. Today it has an active imperialistic role in the European and world chessboard, with interests of its own to pursue, facilitated by its Mediterranean location: from the Albanian protectorate to the reconstruction intervention on the war-devastated areas (Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan...) through the lucrative participation in the manufacture and trade of weapons. The reshaping of the Atlantic alliances by the centre-right government is, in fact, complementary to the regional imperialistic role of the Italian government, which in this way can try to be allowed a 'free hand' on its protectorates, in exchange for the active support of the United States' warmongering policies.

From humanitarian war to permanent war

The end of the Cold War represents a very important change, not only because of the change from a bipolar world

the criminalization of any social resistance, however minimal. The recent security bills passed in France and Great Britain are examples of this, as they equate terrorism with any social struggles that are happening at this time in those countries.

Globalization of struggles

So-called economic globalization is but another stage in capitalist development, as it seeks to expand and spread the tentacles of exploitation more efficiently on a planetary level. For us, globalization must mean globalization of the class struggle.

Inside the antiglobalization movement, as is shown by the media, there are Christians, Marxists, Social-Democrats and other reformist groups which have too often collaborated with capitalism to make globalization stronger. These are often the same groups which work for the development of capitalism in the Third World, interfering in communities and pushing them to destroy their own identity and self-sufficient economies. The consequent migrations from the poorer societies turn out to be only a cheap workforce in the First World, bringing down overall costs. A world in which immigrants are defined as 'illegal, their freedom and human dignity denied, exists because of the lack of a piece of paper. Facing this, the IAF cannot help but keep its identity and objectives: generalized self-management of society, abolition of private property and the construction of an anarchist society. It is therefore very important that we back the anarchist movements in the poorer countries, opening autonomous communication and knowledge channels, beyond the system's mass media, as a first step towards a more widespread implantation of anarchism.

Internal war

The very terms of the internal war changed immediately after the collapse of Soviet 'communism'. The fall of the 'alternative' to private capitalism allowed the Statist system to present capitalism as the only future. In the same way, the threat of a popular coup has been redefined. Capitalism, firmly supported by the State, has launched a staged attack against the modest workers' victories, characteristics of the social-democrat legacy. Thatcherism and Reaganism fully speeded up this attack, which, after the fall of the Soviet régime, has been a constant feature of the political and social scene. The neoliberal offensive has been applied to many fronts. The causalisation of working relationships has ended the stable employment conditions, which had enabled workers to develop collective, self-organized methods of struggle. Under the pretext of modernization and reduction of costs, many areas, traditionally left of capitalist logic, are now opportunities for exploitation. Privatizations of services, from healthcare to education, transport to communications, are examples of this process.

The answer to this war front opened by capitalism against humanity has been an increase in social confrontation on a global level with the working class fighting back with strikes and other forms of resistance. The anarchist movement has always been present in these struggles, its role strengthened by its original initiatives and its capacity to shed light on the global nature of the ongoing processes. Our resistance must be as global as capitalism is.

Both the external and internal war have the same fronts and have been fought with the same determination and ferocity. The militarization of social life has instigated legislation that goes beyond the limits of democratic normality, without facing much opposition from internal conflict. These are made possible thanks to the gigantic anesthetic operation emerging out of the terrorist 'emergency'. Fear is a powerful factor that permits

to a monopolar one, but also, and mainly, because of the need to reformulate the idea of the enemy. In fact, the fall of the 'Empire of Evil' makes it impossible to continue thinking of the enemy as someone who threatens your existence, displaying a military power capable of destroying the planet and humanity. Of the two main features of the idea of the 'enemy', that it be evil and have the ability and the will to be a direct threat, it is the second one that seems to be less relevant now, as no important danger threatens the only superpower. It was therefore impossible for the United States and its allies to think of war as of some extreme measure in the face of a deadly threat. From this point of view a new war paradigm starts forming, a new conception of the role and purpose of war machinery, which otherwise risked having its purpose quite redefined, as a result of a loss of legitimacy.

In this way, the logic of 'humanitarian' action is outlined. Instead of conflicting with the old rule of 'non-interference in the internal affairs' of a country, curiously enough, it reinforces it. 'Humanitarian' action turns out to be the useful excuse, always ready to be formulated in a more precise way in international law terms. The humanitarian principle invoked to justify the war in Kosovo contrasts with the 'non-interference in the internal affairs' rule when it came to the massacre taking place in Chechnya or the war on the Kurds, not to mention the always bitter conflict between Palestine and Israel. The paradigm of humanitarian war points to the issue of the 'just' war, that which is fought to impose a truth, an order and a world vision. It is however, a 'dirty' war because its victims are the civilian refugees and inevitably leads to more deaths, tortures, rapes, more homeless people without hope, unwilling pawns in a game decided somewhere else, in the name of someone else's 'truth'. This propaganda tool has been only marginally useful for the emotional mobilization needed to produce consensus in western populations, particularly Americans, because the 'hu-

manitarian' is clearly unable to achieve the stated aims of the conflict.

The experience of 'humanitarian' war has shown abundantly that it is a perverse mechanism, which increases the evils that is meant to cure, staging a drama in which blood and destruction are the obscene scenery which hide the backstage from the viewer, the empty space behind the curtains. September the eleventh provided the occasion, whether directly orchestrated or ignobly used, to make the qualitative jump needed for the development of the United States imperialist will: its assertion of unchallenged military superiority on the board game of the international relations. The idea of the enemy is again reshaped: it is evil, in fact very evil, and in a position to directly and defiantly strike against in the United States territory and that of its allies. It cannot be identified with any state institution, but is able to infiltrate, direct, adapt itself and make alliances with all those states which are not ready to accept the global leadership of the United States. An enemy like this opens the path to permanent war, against the 'rogue' states and against all those who, from the interior, threaten the world order. This enemy adopts the form of the Islamic extremist. Islamic extremism makes it possible to define an enemy, on the basis of the classic opposition between friend and foe in western culture. It is an empty category, which only exists in opposition, because it lacks a sense and an identity of its own. In fact, it revolves around conservative Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, the most nihilistic liberalism and all the traditional forms of nationalism, racism, populism and democratic culture. In this war, which in its most recent version can also be 'preemptive', the enemy does not need to prove its evil nature by any deeds, but it must be fought because it IS evil. The reasoning around which the attack on Iraq was organized is a good example of this. The presupposition of the possession of weapons of mass destruction is reason enough to declare a

war. The evident dissymmetry between the attacker (who they 'know' possesses weapons of mass

destruction) and the attacked, falls in the realm of 'just war' as it is carried out because the enemy is evil and, therefore, potentially dangerous. It is evil and therefore a natural ally to the terrorism which attacks women, children and defenseless men. Never mind that this same definition could be applied to the policies of the United States and its allies. Is it not, in any instance, the aim in war to terrorize the population of the enemy State in such a way that resistance is crushed? The immoral nature of war leads to the immoral nature of state and to the impossibility of making a fair world order by just reforming the structure.

External war and internal war

The paradigm of permanent war makes victims not only amongst the populations of the 'rogue' states of the time, but also amongst oppositionists of the existent order. Pacifists, antimilitarists, workers on strike, and antiracists are equated to terrorists in a propaganda operation that is reminiscent of the accusations of collaborationism made during the last century to anyone not accepting the logic of war, militarism or the State. In the United States, the passing of the Patriot Act, which opened the possibility of extrajudicial detentions of mere suspects, as well as the later and substantial militarization of American social life, are the unmistakable signs of the fact that the politics of never-ending war have finally infiltrated the very core of the biggest seen a worldwide increase, demonstrated in the repressive measures on the 'internal front', aimed to forcibly discipline workers, indigenous peoples and immigrants, and to crush any opposition.