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they present elements that it would have been better if they had not existed, but that exist, and that no pious intention can exclude. if anarchists want to be purists let them be so, but with revolutions have never been made with purism and the candid exhibition of their own ideological uprightness. Even less have insurrections been realised. To fight on all possible occasions so that the best conditions possible for popular mass insurrection be realised, as far as possible self-managed, is the fundamental task of anarchists militants. and the national liberation struggle has many possibilities of setting out in the insurrectional direction.

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als of justice and right, renounce serving any longer as instrument of the project of pan German political domination, it is not possible to talk of peace". A front contrary to this position was formed immediately. From London Malatesta replied with a piece entitled: Anarchists and Government.

F) The national liberation struggle necessarily flows into in a political revolution precisely because it is a question of a political demand.

Another error that is due to marxist determinism. As in the case of the first of the mistakes considered here, that where a country that is economically dependent on another cannot be independent, this affirms that a struggle for political self-determination necessarily remains within the economic framework that characterises it. we must not forget that as anarchists we participate in all struggles for freedom, so long as they have the essential characteristic of the insurrectional struggles of the base, that is see present the masses along with the action of the minoritarian revolutionary groups with programmes that are politically and ideologically differentiated but which are sufficiently clear so as to have no doubt about their aims. We cannot, as we have often maintained, reserve our intervention to only the struggle guided by the anarchists to the struggles that we suppose have sufficient per cent guarantees of victory. The struggle develops in the struggle, it is never a static model that reproduces itself mechanically always in the same way. Our very presence also within the struggles that start very far from anarchist objectives can cause modifications such as to consent a considerable approach to the revolutionary objectives of anarchism. Now, the struggles for national liberation have precisely this structure: they are strongly contradictory,

tionality is not a principle that is common to the whole of humanity, but is a historical fact, limited to one district, a fact that has undoubtedly, like everything that is real and inoffensive, the right to see oneself recognised by all. Every nation, even the smallest, has its character, its way of living, of expressing itself, of feeling, thinking, acting; and it is this character, this way of being, that form precisely the essence of nationality, the product of a whole historical epoch and the whole of the conditions of the existence of the people". Different, on the other hand, the marxist position of Engels: "The European significance of a people, its vitality counts for nothing from the point of view of the principle of nationality; for such a principal the Romanians of Walacchia who have never had their own history nor the energy to make it, count in the same measure of the Italians with their bi-millenarian history and the unconsumed national energies; the Welsh and the inhabitants of the Isle of Man would have, had they so wished, and absurd as it might seem, the same right as the English to an independent national existence. The whole thing is an absurdity wrapped in popular clothing to throw smoke in the eyes of naive people and that one can use conveniently *slogans* or throw aside, according to the circumstances."

It was precisely this typical error of the *reactionary nation* that alimented the whole question of the so-called *Manifesto of the Sixteen.* The editorial group of the *Temps Nouveaux* split in two groups from the beginning of 1916. the situation in Paris and within the whole of the French and international anarchist movement became hot. the 14th March "*La Bataille*" published the *Manifesto* signed by fifteen people (the sixteenth was Algerian locality of Hussein Dey, mistaken for a militant). among the names were anarchists who were well known all over the world: Grave, Malato, Pierrot, Paul Reclus, cornelissen, Cherhesov and Kropotkin. In the document it was said, among other things, "With those who are struggling we consider that, unless the German population, returning to more sane propos-

The exploitation of the working class comes about in two precise ways which link together through a complex system of complicity: the first is the direct one, carried outby the national bourgeoisie. The second the indirect one, exercised by the bourgeoisie of other nations.

Such a repartition however is not based on an ethnic concept of nation. Internal exploitation is not carried out by the national bourgeoisie in the role of ethnic representatives of power, but as the political representatives of the managerial centres of centralised power. In other words, all the States that exist today, in Europe for example, come from a primitive and preponderant nucleus which has gradually, throughout history, ended up including and dominating the politically and militarily weaker periferal nuclei.

In Spain it was Castille which put this into effect. In France the north subjects the provences in the South. In Great Britain the English subject the Welsh, Scottish and Irish. In Germany it is Prussia who carries out this task, subjecting the small German, Danish and Polish states and even provinces such as Alsace Lorraine, object of endless arguments with France. The same phenomenon has occurred in Russia: the Great-Russians dominate the Romanians, Finlanders, Lithuanians and Poles. In Austria a group of coalized Germans impose dominion on the Greeks and the Slovaks, the Magiari, Poles and Italians, at least up until 1918.

The process of the formation of the large modern States has therefore been characterised by a series of external impositions. Ethnic unities are destroyed, obliged to submit to administrative centralisation and therefore the exploitation worsens.

This is not the kind of conclusion reached by the marxists. They on the contrary think that the function of the monarch of the absolute states has been progressive. Engels writes, "Once the borders were formed between linguistic groups it was natural for them to provide the basis for the formation of states, and for nationalities to begin to develop into nations. the rapid col-

lapse of a State with mixed ethnicity such as Lotharingia shows the importance of this element already in the IXth century. It is true that the medieval period was far from linguistic and territorial confines coinciding; yet, each great nationality, with the exclusion of Italy, was represented in Europe by a particular State of considerable and increasingly clear and conscious extension, and the tendency to create national states in the medieval period constitutes one of the most essential instruments of progress…" (F. Engels, *Uber den Verfall des Feudalismus und das Aufkommen der Bourgeoisie,* in Marx-Engels, *Werke*, vol XXI, pp 395 e sgg, cited by I. Fetscher, *Il Marxismo*, Milan 1970 vol III pp. 62–63). In opposition to this theses Kropotkin writes: "…no matter how the development of the state on the model of imperial Rome violently put an end to all the institutions of mutual aid of medieval times, this new aspect of civilisation cannot last. The State, based on vague aggregation of individuals and only ties of union, does not achieve this end. Then the tendency to mutual aid breaks the bronze laws of the state…" (P. Kropotkin, *Mutual aid*) and Bakunin: "These precursors (the weakened States) must understand what their weakness was in the past, and that their incapacity to form a State constitutes their strength today, their right to a future, and gives a meaning to all the present national movements." (M. Bakunin, *State and anarchy*)

The reactionary and centralising function of the emergence and reinforcement of the powerful States is very clear in the situation in which Sicily finds itself. At the moment of passage from the Bourbons to the Piedmontese there was an incredible increase in fiscal pressure. The total land-tax passed from 50 to 70 million in 1866, while the Centre and the North pay 52 million between them. the sale of ecclesiastical goods brought the unitary state about 600 millions, yet there was more public spending in the north than in the south. The unitary State spent about 92 million in Lombardie for hydraulic works, and 1,333,296 million lire in Sicily. The national pro capita average

function of brake and support of power that many more fortunate dreamers, acting in the privileged are of the industrial north, volenti or nolenti, conscious or unconscious, accomplish. The filtre of culture weighs down any possibility of ransom of the south adding itself to the other reactionary forces that find great space and great support there: fascists, mafia and such like.

E) The theory of reactionary nations.

A strange mistake that often comes back into fashion and which has produced breakdowns in the past. Often many comrades, although denying it at theoretical level, manifest a kind of visceral reaction against some nations that are seen as *reactionary* as such. The most common example of this mistake is made by those comrades who support the struggles and the theoretical position of some ethnic groups such as the blacks in America, the Palestinians, the catholics in northern Ireland, for which the adverse groups, white Americans, Israelian Jews, English protestants in Northern Ireland immediately become example of *reactionary nations*.

Engels spoke with great contempt of the *peoples without history* and condemned the nations to hard slavery, at least until the revolutionary liberation that it was to be necessary to reach through the great nations that are centred with a strong workers' movement. Bakunin on the other hand looked with sympathy towards the *weak nations* because he saw in them the *precursors* of the liberation of tomorrow. Thus he wrote in a famous passage of *State and anarchy:*

"The Slav persecutors must finally understand that the time in which one could play innocently at Slav philology is over and that nothing is more absurd and at the same time more nefast, more mortal for the people than the making of the pseudo-principle of nationality, the ideal of all popular aspirations. Na-

ing and industrial bourgeoisie, doted with other means, but also with another mentality. they reflect a reality that is split in two, that cannot be passed of as unitary, and that is quite far from homogeneity. in practice it is not possible to carry out a political cultural discourse that takes account of the economic dichotomy that supports the contrast development-underdevelopment. For this reason the reality of those who live the hardship of underdevelopment is determined not only by what it represents as a specific situation, but what it represents for all, including those who live in contact with structures that are open to the project of development. Certainly, through these experiences, if they were carried out through an intelligent diffusion of ideas, a change in some of the attitudes held by many comrades who are not in the habit of considering the poverty of the south as the roots of the cause, not as simple effect of the industrialisation of the North, of the so-called major democracy of some privileged regions. But that fact alone is not enough. It is necessary for it to be clear for the poverty of the south to correspond to the wealth of the North, the old lifestyle in the feudal setting of the South corresponds to the dynamic style of modern life in the North, the underdevelopment of the South is linked by an inextricable logic to the development of the North: the logic of capitalism. In order to exist, in fact, capitalism still today, in the multinational era, needs the existence of an area of underdevelopment to use in the colonial sense of the term.

The international game of imperialism does not impede the local game of old-style colonialism. in this sense the south pays the cost of the north and works for the enrichment of the latter. It seems obvious to us more than ever that an improvement in the living conditions of the Sicilian proletariat and of the south in general will not be possible, if not breaking definitively the relation development-underdevelopment and instoring a new logic of a revolutionary kind. Even the Sicilian dreamer can insert himself in this perspective denouncing the substantial

of these costs is 19,71 lire, whereas in Sicily it is only 0,37 lire. Much has been said about the great expense of the railway in Sicily: in the period 1861–1898 about 479 million were spent, while over the whole national territory the national investment was 4 billion 76 million.

The problem of national liberation as such cannot really be understood if it is not placed within this perspective of double exploitation. If one loses this thread when speaking of the local bourgeoisie because it finds itself acting on an ethnic basis, the sense of the class struggle is lost, falling from the frying pan into the fire.

It is not at all true that the local bourgeoisie make fewer claims than the external one. The whole of the bourgeoisie is the same. The class homogeneity of the exploited cannot destroy itself starting from a separatist concept, one must instead insert oneself within a revolutionary optic, re-establishing the general principles of the class struggle that comes from the base, a struggle against exploitation that is carried out in the name of the people, not in the name of an internal and indigenous caste.

By condemning the whole of the bourgeoisie and all the aspirations to power of the restricted minorities, by condemning any discourse that intends to pass over the heads of the exploited, by condemning any decision that concerns stages of the revolutionary process and the double dealing of those who claim to accept compromises that cannot be *maintained*, interest that cannot be paid and commitments that cannot be honoured; we condemn any deformation of the national liberation struggle, a struggle that must assume an internal matrix.

There are no contradictions between these two perspectives. The national liberation struggle becomes a bureaucratic banality, a bloody executioner in the name of the pot-bellied bosses who stay in the comfort of their armchairs, becomes a horrible misdeed carried out at the cost of the people, if it is not set

within the context of going towards proletarian revolutionary internationalism.

Once one accepts the thesis that the internal bourgeoisie is just as contrary to the *true* interests of the people, as was the external one — which the enemy called opportunists in order to confuse ideas — one must also accept that the proletarian isolation of a liberated ethnic nucleus is revolutionary suicide. Its gaze must necessarily be turned towards the outside, on the pain of death of the revolution itself. Any revolution today that intends to place itself on an autarkic basis — if not economic, at least political and of convivence — is unthinkable. Once this is clarified, there remains the other problem, of where to address one's gaze.

The revolutionary movements and organisations of the proletariat of the dominant countries cannot immediately be taken into consideration: most of the European countries plus the USSR, the United States and china, they cannot be taken into consideration because they are too much involved in surviving a situation of terrible repression, or are engaged in trying to find or to regain their identity in a situation that is dispersive or continually changing. then there are the revolutionary movements and proletarian organisations of the countries where there is already a reasonably effective national liberation struggle in course: some European countries, some Arab countries, some Latin-American countries. If our interlocutor remains the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world, the revolutionary proletariat struggling for their own national liberation can be considered a privileged interlocutor.

This line of interpretation seems beyond discussion to us. Starting from it is possible to develop an organisational proposal based, obviously on the prejudicial of the struggle against the internal and external bourgeoisie.

This discourse must be in the logic of federalism, it must come from the base, and take account of the small local communities coordinated together in view of production and admin-

ing in harmony with the Marxist thesis of the consolidation of the state as anti-room of worker consolidation continues, "Bourgeoisie and proletariat… have the same interest in eliminating the feudal splitting up of the nation into small States and statelets, in reunifying all the elements that live in one same territory and speak the same language, into one national State, since this reunification represents an enormous progress in respect to that breaking up, and it is an important condition for the development of the productivity of work". (*Idem* p. 12) It is a question of positions that do not take into consideration the concrete relationship that passes between the political self-determination and the real context of the class struggle. So doing one can reach the conclusion that as a phase with a clear political matrix, self-determination represents only a utopian exigence that retrograde dreamers carry on, not realising that advanced capitalism has already gone beyond these national principles (instances). Once again this error does not recognise the active and determining role of the proletariat in struggle. Political self-determination, the recognition of the necessity of national liberation are not only a vague utopian dream of the bourgeoisie but also a sentiment that is strongly felt by the proletarian strata. Now if in the bourgeois class this statement is nourished with projects of dominion that are in fact utopian, when considered separately in the perspective of advanced capitalism; the same sentiment in the proletarian class is extremely realistic as it is able to construct, precisely in the moment of passage, the spark that unleashes the conditions of the revolutionary clash.

That does not mean that — especially in Sicily — one does not have to take account of the so-called "retrograde dreamers". Here the latter are oriented towards a general and innocuous (for them) parasitical progressivism and therefore energetically block any struggle that moves the proletarian base. The communist party and the recent radical forces fascinate and condition them. they represent the alibi of the landown-

is precisely the contradiction of the interests and differences between the waiting of various social groups, and the true possibility of realising it. each national liberation movement is therefore characterised by a double aspect: it has a revolutionary potential and an anachronistic reactionary residual. the first is incarnated in the capacity for proletarian struggle, the second in the managerial claims of the bourgeoisie. this movement is in itself a result of the class struggle, which has turned out to be in a continual state of modification. However, it can neither be sanctified on the altar of revolutionary glory, nor thrown into the mud and dust of reaction. To say that it is only one of these two characteristics which characterises the national liberation movement, means to suppose that a stable alliance is possible between the revolutionary proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In fact it means to give as possible a blind interclassist collaboration, when instead reality continually shows us contradictions that are always at boiling point.

D) National liberation is a need of the bourgeoisie alone.

Another serious mistake. This is the thesis supported by Kautsky: "… the capitalist class will equip its interests to those of the entire nation. The higher the surplus value of the capitalists of a nation, the greater the prosperity the nation is in our eyes; for them patriotism means pursuing the interests of surplus value that the exploiters of a nation pocket… they do not intend such as dedication to the homeland, sacrifice of goods and blood, so much as exploitation of the homeland, which should enter the field the gods and blood of their popular massed to protect the profits of their capitalists abroad. the homeland does not exist for the people so much as the popular masses exist for the homeland…". (K. Kautsky, *Patriotismus und Socialdemokratie*, Leipzig, 1908, pp. 8–10). And, continu-

istration. The future aims of the freed community and those organised freely in federations such as those in the course of liberation struggling to create this organisation that we can define self-managed must be: complete destruction of an integral perspective that makes the individual the basis of society.

In the perspective of contributing to the clarification of some of the questions relative to the national liberation struggle more concretely, we shall look at some of the problems that are raised more frequently by the adversaries of this revolutionary project.

A) A country that is economically dependent on another cannot be politically independent.

This is a common misconception even among the revolutionary comrades who accept the project of the national liberation struggle in part at least. These comrades insist on the fact that in this perspective it is necessary to reinforce the economy of a country or part of a country in order to improve the process of separation in course by accelerating the elements which compete in favour of the split. This is the kind of mistake that Marx made when writing to Engels he rejoiced in the victory of Bismark under the illusion that the reinforcing of the German nationalist bourgeoisie (Prussian) meant a parallel reinforcement of the proletariat's organisations.

In a situation such as the present one in Sicily, clearly dependent on the Italian market and, through it, the international one, no national liberation perspective would be possible — if this thesis were valid. In fact, reasoning in this way, we would find that neither the Sicilian bourgeoisie or the proletariat would be interested in their liberation, the first because they are economically linked to the Italian bourgeoisie, and the second because they could only be liberated at the same time as the Italian proletariat. If there might be some foundation for

this position as far as the Italian bourgeoisie are concerned, as it could not accept its self-negation, only being available for the clash in the hope of managing to impose its own absolute dominion; it is not valid for the Sicilian proletariat, which could lay the conditions for the future liberation of the Italian proletariat starting from its own liberation, not vice versa. The unity of the Italian and Sicilian proletariat is not denied in the national liberation struggle of the former, but is reconfirmed in the future perspective of the liberation of both. The same cannot be said for the Italian bourgeoisie, which realises more easily, free as it is from the illusion of the nationalist ideology, the difficulty of formulating a relationship of collaboration with a probable future dominant national bourgeoisie.

The fact that the political self determination of a country puts into act processes that are very difficult to manage for the revolutionary proletariat, is another problem. This re-enters the more general bunch of questions concerning the proletariat's need or not to participate in a partial (economic and political) revolution, and try to impose, within the capabilities of its own strength, the social revolution.

B) The nation is essentially a cultural phenomenon.

The problem is reduced to the spiritual element alone, denying legitimacy of political self-determination.

Many States in fact are quite obviously underlining the ethnic characterisation that distinguishes individual social groups. the division into regions of the Italian state responds to needs in a subordinate way, but corresponds primarily to ethnic differentiation. the fact that one insists so much on the use of local languages, and that it is the Italian state itself that is financing research and the Sicilian chairs, are elements of a larger mosaic where the dominant state wants to enclose the basic need

for liberation. so one speaks Sicilian in Sicily, and, why not, German in Triest and Bolzano, so that exploitation can continue. the local bourgeoisie tightens its agreements better with those at national level, satisfying its own nostalgic stimuli of a disueto nationalism, while that proletariat amuse themselves with sentiments that flatter them, and continue to suffer under the yoke of the bosses. If the nation were only a spiritual and cultural fact, the most one could ask of the forces available for a national liberation struggle in Sicily would be that of fighting for a better and more recent and complete edition of the best Sicilian-Italian dictionary available. But that is not how things stand. To an ethnic unity of a cultural and spiritual nature, there corresponds a precise political dimension: in the limits in which this dimension turns out to be an element of coagulation of revolutionary forces it is in the interest of the proletariat and all the exploited to engage themselves to reach the logical consequences, those of an economical and political revolution. It is up to all revolutionaries, in the course of the struggle itself, to bring about the conditions necessary for the development of the social revolution.

C) The national liberation struggle is outdated.

According to this commonplace every organisation of struggle for national liberation is enveloped in the real field of the class struggle, remaining tied to the anachronistic ideals typical of the reactionary petty bourgeoisie. an objection that fails to grasp the contradictory aspect of the situations in which, precisely the ethnic unity is calculated by a domination that is substantially foreign. the acceptation of such a thesis is equal to the opposite one which maintains that all separatism is revolutionary, even the nostalgic and really anachronistic one of the national bourgeoisie. What counts in the reality of the struggle