

## THE INVARIANCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY POSITION ON WAR

# The meaning of revolutionary defeatism

The position of revolutionaries confronted with capitalist war is always the same: to oppose social revolution to war, to struggle against «their own» bourgeoisie and «their own» national state. Historically, this position is called revolutionary defeatism because it openly proclaims that the proletariat must struggle against the enemy which is in its «own» country, that it must act so as to bring about its defeat and that it is only in this way that it participates in the revolutionary unification of the world proletariat, it is only in this way that proletarian revolution can develop across the world. From the origins of the workers' movement, the question of war and revolution, the question of the opposition between war and revolution, is central. Effectively, it is in a period of war and revolution (and history shows us the interaction between the two poles) that we can see most clearly who is on one side of the barricades and who is on the other. Throughout history the position on war and revolution has been the culminating point at which various forces and parties calling themselves revolutionary (or socialist, or anarchist, or communist...) have been unmasked and have finally been forced to reveal their counter-revolutionary face(1) in their affirmations that such and such a war was a just war, that a particular country was the victim of aggression, that they were opposed to war but only in certain circumstances, that they support the liberation of some nation against some other...

By contrast, no doubt is possible from a revolutionary point of view. There is no need to wait for war to

be declared to understand its nature, no need for the geopolitical speculations which are fashionable among bourgeois intellectuals or in cultured journals like *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Declarations made by the two protagonists in the name of peace which define who is the «aggressor» and who is the «victim» don't matter much. Like all the programmatic positions of communism, the position of revolutionaries confronting war between bourgeois states (or nationalist fractions which claim autonomy or independence) is simple and decisive:

- there is no such thing as a just war
- there is no such thing as a defensive war
- all wars of national liberation are inter-imperialist (and therefore imperialist)
- there is no camp which is for peace while another is for war
- there is no camp which represents barbarism while the other represents civilisation
- there is no camp which is more aggressive than the other
- there is no democratic camp against a dictatorial or fascist camp...or the other way round.

The opposites of all these formulae are used indiscriminately by the two capitalist camps with the aim of recruiting for their war(2).

The classic position of revolutionaries is to oppose any war between nation states with all their might. It is not based on an idea that we have about how we would like the world to be, an “idea” which constitutes the common denominator of the pacifists who, in the name of eternal peace, inevitably end up in one or other camp of capitalist war, ratifying their vocation as defenders of the “peace of the grave”. On the contrary, this position comes from the material interests of the proletariat, from the fact that its general antagonism to capital is not an opposition to such and such a bourgeois fraction according to the government policy of the moment, but an opposition to the whole of the bourgeoisie, whatever its policies. Our practical antagonism to all war between states is the inevitable consequence of the fact that our interests are not opposed to the bourgeoisie because they are “fascists” or “democrats”, on the right or on the left, national imperialists or imperialist nationals, but purely and simply because they are bourgeois. Our opposition is the consequence of an incontestable truth: between exploiter and exploited there cannot be any unity which doesn’t benefit the former. Any front or critical support for one camp against another benefits the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

Each class acts in accord with its interests and its fundamental programme. Capital is nothing more than capitals confronting each other. Capital itself contains the war between capitals, and it is precisely because of that that all the bourgeois fractions, whatever they might say, participate in one way or another in commercial and military wars which derive from the very nature of value in struggle against other values so as to valorise itself.

In the same way, the proletariat can only act as a class in refusing to serve as cannon fodder in national wars. It is not a question of one choice amongst others but of its existence as a class: it has no particular or regional interest to defend which opposes it to other proletarians – on the contrary, each faction of the proletariat, however limited its class action against capital might be, contains universality, expresses the interests of humanity by opposing every war.

You can reply to us that in numerous national wars proletarians have participated in and supported one or other camp. It’s true, but they are not acting in accord with their own interests, they are acting precisely on the basis of the ideological domination of the dominant class. They are not acting as a worldwide class but as cannon fodder for the bourgeoisie. They are not acting as a revolutionary class but are negating themselves as a class and adhering to the people, to the nation, which is the very negation of the proletariat (“the proletariat has no country”). Bourgeois war, with massive and popular participation (as for example in the so-called Second World War) is the direct liquidation of the proletariat, of the very subject of revolution, to the benefit of capital. Therefore,

beyond the subjective interests pursued by each capitalist, each bourgeois fraction in the commercial and then military war, capital in its entirety has an objective interest in the war: the destruction of the very subject of revolution, the disappearance, sometimes for a long historical period, of communism as a force.

Faced with this, the development of the proletariat as a class starts from life itself. In effect, our struggle begins with our very existence as a class, by our confrontation, from our birth, with private property, capital and the state. The positions that we have as organised proletarians do not start out from consideration of what the existing camps say but from our permanent confrontation with exploitation, with the inhuman conditions of life that the system imposes on us and which reach their highest level of inhumanity during wars.

Because war is the very essence of this society, because capital cannot live without periodic wars and its cycle of life is based on successive destruction of productive forces, the only real, radical and profound opposition to war is revolutionary opposition. Only social revolution will definitively put an end to war, for all time.

That is why the cry of revolutionaries in the face of war has always been: “turn the imperialist war into a social war for universal revolution”. In isolation, this slogan has nevertheless been revealed as historically insufficient because real opposition to war and to international capital means in practice an open opposition to the bourgeoisie and the state which, in every camp, recruits for the war. That opposition expresses itself very practically because the bourgeoisie knows how to use the whole terrorist arsenal of its state to impose recruitment and adherence to the war: “state of war” police measures, generalised censorship, general mobilisation, nationalist fanaticism (racism, xenophobia, religious sectarianism), the repression of revolutionaries accused of supporting the opposing camp (accusations of espionage) or “high treason”, etc. (3)

In such circumstances, to declare oneself against the war and the bourgeoisie in general, without taking a concrete action against the increase of exploitation that all war generates is only a simple propaganda formula and not a revolutionary direction for action. In effect, bourgeois war concretises itself above all else as the war of a state against “its” proletariat, that is to say against the proletariat of that country, to grind it down, to liquidate the revolutionary minorities and to drag it progressively into the bourgeois war.

This shows that it is indispensable, inescapable, indisputable to assert the fact that “the enemy is in our own country”, that it is “our own bourgeoisie”, “our own state”. It is in the struggle to bring about the defeat of “its own” bourgeoisie, of “its own” state that the proletariat really assumes internationalist solidarity with the world revolution. Or, to speak from a more global point of view, the world revolution is constituted precisely in the generalisation of the revolutionary defeatism of the world proletariat.

More than this, the proletariat “of” such or such a country (4) cannot deal a class blow to “its” bourgeoisie and “its” state, nor extend the hand of solidarity to its class brothers and sisters in the “other camp” who are also at war with “their” bourgeoisie and “their” state, without committing an “act of high treason”, without contributing to the defeat of “its own army”, without acting overtly to degrade the army of “its own country”. What’s more, revolutionary defeatism concretises itself not only by fraternity between fronts with the soldiers (proletarians in uniform) of the “other camp” (the only aspect accepted by centrism) but also by the concrete action of destruction of “its own” army.

Historically, revolutionaries have also distinguished themselves from centrists by their appeal for the independent organisation of soldiers against officers, for the leadership which they give to the concrete action of sabotaging the army, by the call to shoot “your own officers” (and by their energetic struggle to put this into practice), by the fact of turning rifles away from the “external enemy” and pointing them at the “officers” of the fatherland.

In fact the experience of war and revolution, and in particular the concrete experience of what is called the “First” world war has allowed us to clarify the point that the call for revolutionary struggle against bourgeois war is completely insufficient and centrist in practice if it is not accompanied by its practical concretisation, that is to say open struggle against “its own” bourgeoisie, for the defeat of “its own” state.

In all cases, “the war against the foreigner” means above all else “war against the proletariat” of that country. In fact if you practically oppose a general mobilisation led by one bourgeois or one concrete national state, to say that you are struggling “against all the bourgeoisie whoever they are”, or to appeal to “revolutionary struggle against the war” without acting concretely for the defeat of “your own” country is equivalent to falling into propagandism (5) and playing the game of chauvinism.

During the so-called First World War, the Centre of the Second International (in opposition to its Right which declared itself for “defence of the nation”) claimed to oppose revolution to war and launched slogans as radical as “war on war”. But, at the same time, it opposed revolutionary defeatist calls because, so they said, (like all the army generals!) that would benefit the national enemy, and so they ended up proposing slogans like “neither victory nor defeat”.

We mustn’t forget that no fraction of the bourgeoisie has ever declared itself in favour of war, they all claim to be fighting for peace, and the generals themselves know that peace is nothing other than a fundamental weapon of war. When the social democrats, like E. David, vote for war credits (6), it is not in the name of war, but in the name of peace and to “prevent defeat”. Here is how E. David justified his vote: “the purpose of our vote of 4 August is the following: not for war but against defeat”. It is clear that in the face of a

war which concretised itself as a war between the proletariat and “its own” state, the classic position of bourgeois socialism, as well as the position which pronounces “neither victory or defeat”, would disorganise the proletariat and help lead it to butchery. [...]

We can note here that revolutionary defeatism (opposing the social revolution to war), that concretisation of the position revolutionaries always hold, doesn't come in any way from an ideological speculation on the policy of this or that bourgeois fraction but from the very essence of the proletariat, from its vital needs. In effect, the struggle of the proletariat, the totality of the programmatic content of the communist revolution emerges from the struggle against exploitation. It is the most natural thing that when the proletariat is confronted with war it not only does not abandon the permanent struggle against exploitation (the struggle against “its own” bosses, against “its own” bourgeoisie, against “its own” unions, against “its own” government) but that it intensifies it because war always implies that the conditions of exploitation and, in general, all the conditions of life (and struggle) brutally worsen. It will be the same bourgeois, the same trade unionists, the same politicians and governments who, without exception, try to make the proletariat forget these conditions of life and demand more sacrifices, more work for less pay, and plenty of other things which, according to country and circumstances, will range from voluntary collections for the front to ministerial decrees imposing days of forced labour to support the war effort and the levying of a percentage of wages to be contributed to the war effort of the “nation” [...]. In these circumstances, while nationalism attacks the proletariat, centrism tries to weaken the immediate revolutionary struggle (8) against the sectors of the bourgeoisie which directly impose war sacrifices.

To do this it doesn't hesitate in launching vague slogans concerning the opposition of the revolution to war in general, arguing that we mustn't play into the hands of the “enemy country”, that the struggle against capitalism in general does not require absolute revolutionary defeatism because all the fractions of capital are equal (9). It is precisely in those moments where any immediate struggle against exploitation reveals its character of sabotage of the national effort and where revolutionary struggle becomes indispensable to obtain daily bread that the positions proper to centrism (positions which resemble a classic position of bourgeois neutrality supplemented by a collection of resounding declarations against war and for revolution) can take their place as the ultimate bulwark against revolution.

In every war the rate of exploitation of the proletariat increases in a direct way and its conditions of existence are degraded by the fact of destruction, from the lack of provisions and because, moreover, of what every war implies, the unleashing of state terrorism with the aim of persuading proletarians to kill and be killed at the front.

That is why struggling against “one’s own” bourgeoisie, fighting for the defeat of “one’s own” national (imperialist) camp are not positions invented or introduced into the movement by revolutionaries.

They are the result of the very development of the struggle against exploitation which through war undergoes a qualitative leap. The separation between economics and politics by which they try to bamboozle proletarians and which seems to have a certain reality in times of peace is practically liquidated during war. The illusion of defending the economic conditions of the proletariat without being involved in politics crumbles. Every action of the proletariat to defend its vital interests opposes it to the policies of “its own” state. In times of war the “economic” struggle of the proletariat is directly a defeatist struggle.

It is directly a revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary defeatism is a question of life or death for the proletariat. Any action based on proletarian interests leads to the defeat of “its own” state and [...] any really revolutionary agitation is a contribution to the defeat of “one’s own camp”.

That is why, when they tell us to abandon the struggle against exploitation, or that now is not the moment or that the main enemy is elsewhere (“dictatorship” or “fascism”... (10)), every time they are in fact acting to purely and simply liquidate the struggle of the proletariat. Even worse, if in periods of war the proletariat cannot defend its most elementary conditions of life without struggling against “its own” bourgeoisie, without acting overtly for the defeat of “its own” government, it renounces not only its most elementary material interests but its existence as a class.

This is to say that if the position of revolutionaries in the face of war finds itself in complete harmony with their general positions this is because these positions come out of the interests of the proletariat themselves, from their immediate and historic interests which are inseparable. In no way and under no circumstances does the proletariat have an interest in sacrificing itself, whether in the name of the war against an external enemy or under the false pretext that the enemies are all equal, the slogan “neither victory nor defeat”. Each time it is asked to put to one side its conditions of life, each time it is asked to sacrifice itself in the name of the struggle against fascism, imperialism, the external enemy... this is a betrayal of its interests.

To finish off, let’s respond to an objection which has always arisen in the face of the defeatist position of revolutionaries. It is obvious that the counter-revolution will assimilate national defeat into the national victory of the opposing camp. Elsewhere the centrists launch slogans such as “neither victory nor defeat” on the basis of this argument. It is clear, however, that this position is situated exclusively in the national (and not class) framework and that it is a question of a conception which sees in war only national victories or defeats and not the revolutionary liquidation of the army, proletarian insurrection etc.

However much this position claims to be on the left or extreme left it does not hold back in the least from the militarist and imperialist argument par excellence, the argument of the generals who run the war. For them it is logical that the revolutionary proletariat should be a “traitor to the nation” and “favour the country’s enemy”. In reality, the more the defeat of the national army accelerates, the more uprisings of troops and insurrectional mutinies break out, the more fraternisation spreads on the front, the more the opposing national army will also be weakened and we can verify historically how the officers of “our own” army join forces with those of the other camp to struggle against the proletarian movement. These agreements between enemy officers are completely normal in view of the fact that the insurrectional decomposition of the state always goes beyond a strictly national framework. This is because while the proletariat is really in the process of attacking “its own” bourgeoisie, “its own” army, “its own” state, it is the whole of the bourgeoisie which it is attacking, all the bourgeois armies, the whole of the world state – in brief, world capital in its totality. Faced with the process of generalised defeatism, we can see that throughout the history of capitalism the world bourgeoisie tries to unify itself, to obtain agreements against desertion in both camps, to attack the bastions of insurrection in their entirety. It is then inevitable that class confrontation is given the highest priority.

To recap what we have argued above, revolutionary defeatism is the best way of transforming imperialist war into revolutionary civil war, war between nations or capitalist fractions into social revolution.

Furthermore, the more the defeat and disorganisation of “our own” state becomes a reality, the less the state is capable of repressing revolutionary action and the easier it is to communicate and to centralise the revolutionary action developed by the proletariat in the other camp. The struggle “against our own bourgeoisie” and against “our own” state thus takes on a supreme level when, on both sides of the front, agitation and direct action leads to the disorganisation and revolutionary defeat of all the armies, strengthening the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

Of course, revolutionary defeatism is often much stronger in one camp than the other. In general this results from the fact that the politico-military weakening of the army is more important in one camp than in the other and/or from the fact of revolutionary action itself, from the organisation of the soldiers, from the most determined character of the avant-garde sectors of the proletariat. From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, all this will be used to confirm that proletarians favour the opposed national camp. But the strength of revolutionary defeatism in one camp allows the development and reinforcement of revolutionary defeatism in the opposed camp in a still more determined fashion. The means which have got results in “our” camp will also be applied there. So, action coordinated with the internationalists who find themselves in the other camp

allows a far more effective defeatist propaganda, appeals to desertion “in the other camp” will have much more force and will be better understood by the soldiers themselves.

We must not forget that the transformation of imperialist war into revolutionary social war is possible thanks to the generalisation of revolutionary defeatism, which in turn requires agitation and direct action in all camps. This agitation and this direct action must be put to good use by the avant-garde sectors of the proletariat who coordinate action across the front lines that the international bourgeoisie try to impose. It will be precisely in the camp where revolutionary defeatism is the most general and the most profound that avant-garde minorities will be most able to develop revolutionary defeatism in the “opposing camp”.

Consequently, there, where revolutionary defeatism is most weak, where repression is exercised without restraint, the most important international support will come from comrades who, in the “other camp”, are succeeding in imposing revolutionary defeatism. As we have said already, the most precious aid from comrades in the “other camp” comes from the revolutionary defeat of “their” army. The more that army falls apart, the more comrades will increase their capacity to appeal for fraternisation on all fronts, for desertion, for the organisation of the struggle for the generalisation of defeatism in all the bourgeois armies.

In its essence, revolutionary defeatism is general and never national. It may well express itself at different levels in different countries or bourgeois camps, but while it concretises itself in one country or one camp it inevitably tends to generalise to the others. This historic determination is taken in hand and led by the avant-garde of the proletariat who try to concentrate their defeatist efforts (propaganda, action, sabotage...) precisely in the places and “camps” of the imperialist war where defeatism has the least force to show the proletariat of “that camp” that with revolutionary defeatism it has nothing to lose and a world to win.

In all the great revolutionary experiences we can see the inevitable phenomenon of the generalisation of revolutionary defeatism (11). Contrary to all the defeatist or neutralist arguments of the centrists, far from being more controllable or invadable, a country in which revolutionary defeatism imposes itself carries an enormous risk for the bourgeoisie of the opposing camp if they want to continue the inter-bourgeois war.

From the Paris Commune to the proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917, we can see that when facing an insurrectional movement of the proletariat “the opposed national army” finds itself paralysed in the face of an important tendency to fraternisation and thus to movements of troops against “their own” bourgeoisie. When in 1918/19 the German bourgeoisie decided to ignore this principle and continue the imperialist war against



insurgent Russia, they quickly became aware that revolutionary defeatism was taking on a previously unsuspected force in Germany thanks to the “contagion” and the revolutionary defeatist action of communists in both camps. The result was that proletarian insurrection spread in Germany as well.

The old allies of Russia also immediately declared war on revolutionary Russia under the pretext that “they don’t respect the previous diplomatic and military agreements” and a dozen armies then attempted to liquidate the insurrectional movement in Russia. But here as well revolutionary defeatism generalised itself to all the armies. The organisation of workers and soldiers, the fraternisations, execution of officers, occupation of ships by rebellious sailors and of barracks by troops in the French armed forces, as well as those of Belgium and Britain. Revolutionary defeatism was general in all the countries which participated in the war, in the manner of the wave of world-wide proletarian insurrection in 1919. The cleverest bourgeois then understood that it is not possible to fight insurrection and revolutionary defeatism by sending more soldiers and more armies because they will decompose ever more rapidly and violently when faced with an insurgent proletariat. Winston Churchill expressed that truth when he said that trying to crush an insurrection with an army is like trying to stop a flood with a broom.

Revolutionary defeatism can never be conceived of as a question of countries or of nations, but as a general opposition of the proletariat to capital. So far we have spoken, without a further clarification, of “our own” bourgeoisie, “our own” state and so on. But, as all our readers know, our group has never ceased to insist, since it started, that the state is worldwide, that capital is worldwide. From the revolutionary defeatist point of view, while we act against “our own” bourgeoisie and “our own” state, this has nothing to do with the nationality of the bourgeois or the government which we face, as our enemies try to make people believe as they deform the invariant content of our positions. We can never repeat enough that the proletariat must struggle against all bourgeois, against all governments. It is a matter of insisting on struggle against the immediate bosses and immediate forces of repression, but as part of the world-wide struggle of the proletariat against the world bourgeoisie.

The struggle of the proletariat cannot rest on any intermediary, and that is precisely why the struggle against capital is always a struggle against direct exploitation and state repression. The struggle against direct repression and exploitation attacks the very bases of worldwide capital accumulation and the world state. To put it another way, the central characteristic of the struggle of the proletariat is the organic centrality of its direct action against capital, by which (contrary to the struggle of capital) even if that struggle takes place in a single neighbourhood, a single industrial district, a single town, it contains the totality and represents, independently of the consciousness of its protagonists, the organic general interests of the proletariat worldwide.

For the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the central determinations of struggle are exactly opposed.

However much it may pretend to have a general validity, the struggle of a bourgeois fraction always contains an egoistic and particular interest because any movement of valorisation attacks other processes of valorisation which must necessarily have interests opposed to it (12). That is why the notion of unity defended by a fraction of the bourgeoisie is fundamentally a democratic unity, an unstable alliance, the result of the unification of opposed interests which ceaselessly fractures. Whatever is the level of bourgeois unification it is always a question of a temporary union against other, rival, fractions. By contrast, the proletariat, even when it struggles around something particular, affirms its organic being as a totality facing capital in its entirety.

That is why, when we speak of “our own” state and “our own” bourgeoisie, we don’t mean the bourgeoisie and the state of this nation (13), but simply the bourgeoisie which exploits us directly, those who repress us every day, the priests and/or trade unions that we have to confront every day and which try to lead us to the abattoir of war. In a word, we mean the tentacle of the world state which grips us and that we must slice through to improve the general balance of forces in relation to the international capitalist monster.

If at some given moment, so as to re-establish capitalist order, other bosses are put in place of the ones which we confront every day, or if the national government solicits external help to repress us, revolutionary defeatism continues to be applied against the new bosses and the new immediate repressive forces, independent of their nationality, for the same reasons and in the same way that we fought the old bosses and the old government. That position is fundamental in the context of the bourgeois and imperialist polemic about national liberation. Time and time again they try to turn the struggle against the local bourgeois towards the struggle against the “imperial” (14) bourgeois and time and time again they try to impose the struggle between national fractions against the struggle between classes.

The most complicated situation arises when the local bourgeoisie, totally overwhelmed by “their own” proletariat and having bourgeois sectors taking up the discourse of “anti-imperialism” for an opposition, call for help from the “imperialist” fraction to repress the insurgent proletariat, or where the bourgeois fraction which calls itself “anti-imperialist” imposes itself militarily on the others. In these cases, they try to squeeze the proletariat between two imperialist forces, thus attempting to transform its social struggle into imperialist war.

But even in that situation we are not faced with a new phenomenon. It is a matter of a classic

imperialist war against the proletariat, hidden, like every imperialist war, behind national flags (15). It's obvious that faced with this situation the position of revolutionaries doesn't change one bit, quite the contrary! Revolutionary defeatism shows all its relevance and continues to be applied both to the "national liberators" who claim to be anti-imperialist as well as to the military force of the "imperialist power" which tries to re-establish order.

In all situations, therefore, the revolutionary struggle for the transformation of the imperialist war into social war against "our own" bourgeoisie makes itself concrete by revolutionary defeatism, or to put it another way, by the struggle against the enemy which is "in our own country", against those who directly run, on behalf of world capital, "our" exploitation and "our" repression. The strength of the proletariat against capital depends precisely on its capacity to adapt itself to the struggle against the various bourgeois fractions, against the different forms of domination which capital tries to impose on us.

Against every bourgeois war, revolutionaries have given, still give and will always give the same : response of revolutionary defeatism.

**Today as yesterday:**

**The enemy is "in our own country", it is "our own" bourgeoisie!**

**The arms which they want us to point at the foreigner must be turned against "our own" state!**

**Let's transform the inter-bourgeois war into revolutionary war!**

**Let's transform the war between states into a war to destroy all states!**

## Notes

1. The fact that in 1914 official European social democracy placed itself on the side of national war is nothing other than the confirmation of its counter-revolutionary nature which had already been denounced for a long time by revolutionary militants. German social democracy in particular had already supported the imperialist military action of “its own” state elsewhere. But the fact that in 1914 the imperialist and bourgeois characters of the socialist parties was definitively unmasked contributed to the myth (maintained by innumerable groups and centrist parties) of a social democracy which suddenly lost its character as an organisation of the proletariat.
2. Here we are only setting out our positions, without argument or explanation. Those who would like to know our explanation of the fact that every war of national liberation is an imperialist war, or that peace is a part of war, those who want to know why we refuse any support to a democratic camp against a dictatorial or fascist camp, we would direct to preceding issues of our central review. [...]
3. In this “etc.” we can also include the bombing of entire regions where deserters gather (see our various articles on the class struggle in Iraq), or the destruction of towns and villages which don’t support the war.
4. It is always more correct programmatically to speak of the (world) proletariat “in” such or such a country but, within the limits of the dominant language, this often makes the formulation too cumbersome: independently of the formulation that we are forced to employ, it should therefore be clear that we are always referring to the world proletariat “in” such and such a region or country.
5. In the end it is an idealist position identical to that put forward by those who maintain that you shouldn’t struggle for immediate demands because that would be reformist, but you should struggle for revolution. As if the reformist can satisfy the immediate interests of proletarians! As if the struggle for social revolution can emerge by other means than by the generalisation of all the immediate demands! As if the revolution itself is something other than a need, an always more immediate necessity for the proletariat in its entirety!
6. The famous vote for war credits by the social democrats (despite all the fuss that is made about it) is nothing other than the symbolic part of their global practice aiming at crushing the proletariat and leading it to slaughter. The mystification consists in believing that this vote was decisive in the unleashing of the war when in fact it was nothing other than the parliamentary formalisation of a much more general action which had been going on for a long time. This was the domestication of proletarians to the extent that they accepted to kill and be killed for the interests of the bourgeoisie. That said, because the social democrats themselves have always mystified that vote, it is interesting to quote them as they claim to justify it.
7. ....
8. Our group has always condemned the social democratic separation between economic struggle and political struggle, between the immediate struggle and the historic struggle. This is a separation which always ends up by establishing intermediate or bridging programmes. This obviously has a general validity but it is precisely in times of war, because of the efforts and general mobilisation involved, that our statement becomes socially evident and directly relevant. In effect, in these moments, every economic struggle of the proletariat attacks the national war effort; every immediate struggle against exploitation takes on a character of war against the state. The struggle of the proletariat is then immediately a revolutionary struggle.

9. It is obvious that all the fractions of capital are equally enemies of the proletariat. But the problem in this context is that this argument serves to paralyse the only struggle possible: the concrete struggle against the bourgeoisie and the state which exploits, dominates and imposes the national war effort. What's more, it is, for the proletariat, the only way to develop its own power and to struggle at the same time against the bourgeoisie of the opposing camp and against capital in general, which concretise itself, as we will see later on, in the revolutionary defeat of "its army" and the generalisation of insurrection.

10. Creating fear by brandishing the spectre of fascism is a constant of the counter-revolution which has cost humanity hundreds of millions of dead since the 1920s (it's enough to think of the 60 million dead in the so-called Second World War). We should also recall that in Spain it was in this way that in 1936/7 the (Republican) state managed to disarm and liquidate the proletariat that was the last rampart against war. But war was indispensable to world capital and it finally succeeded in waging it.

11. And vice versa. When revolutionary defeatism does not impose itself at all and the proletariat submits to the nation, to the popular front, to fascism and to anti-fascism, as was the case during the "Second World War", imperialist nationalism develops on all fronts and camps and the generalisation of massacre is total. In that particular case the war destroyed everything that capital needed to destroy to be able to begin a new cycle of expansion based on mounds of corpses of "workers" who died clutching their national flags.

12. The state of the Yankee imperialists is not the first in the history of bourgeois social formation to claim to incarnate the general interests of world capital! From the origins of capitalism, various powers and bourgeois alliances (whether it's the Vatican, the India Companies or the maritime power of the British Empire) have tried to create a single solid order. But this unity always cracks, bringing to nothing all the theories of Global Monopoly and Ultra-Imperialism ardently defended, yesterday just as today, in the bourgeois camp in general and by the social democrats in particular.

13. What's more, as can be seen in some of our other texts, the nation does not coincide in any way with the structuration of the bourgeoisie into a state.

14. We mustn't forget that the local bourgeoisie are equally imperialist.

15. We want to take the opportunity to make it clear that, contrary to all the myths about "national liberation", this type of capitalist war is not something characteristic of "colonized", "poor" or "under-developed" countries as the bourgeois "left" say. That type of war is proper to the whole world, including in old Europe where there were and still are and will be "national wars" as long as capital lasts. This type of war does not belong to capital's past or to one of its phases, but results from the development of capital itself and will continue to exist while that social system exists.

