

# INTERNATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

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Profit Kills  
The War in Kosovo  
Refuse Capitalism's War Logic !  
Capitalism and Genocide

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### Erratum :

In IP 35, in the article entitled 'Deeper into Deadend Street', an error was made on page 3, column 2, paragraph 2 : the reference to « East Africa » should have been to « East Asia ».

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# PROFIT KILLS

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The engineer was interviewed amidst the rubble of the earthquake in Turkey. "How many of these buildings would still be standing if the proper materials would have been used in their construction?" the TV reporter asked. "All of them", the engineer answered with a tired voice, "all of them". Thousands were killed in Turkey and hundreds of thousands made homeless, not by an earthquake but by profit. The purpose of building houses in this society is not to shelter people. It is to make profit. If this can be done by providing people with a sturdy home, fine. If not, the cheapest materials are used to knock together houses that are doomed to crumble when the earth moves in Turkey or Taiwan, when a hurricane hits Florida or when rivers overflow in Mexico or China. The builders plead innocence. If they followed proper procedures, they say, their rates of profit would be so low that investors would shun them, and they could build no more houses and millions more would have to live in shanty towns. Would that be any worse?

The purpose of producing medicine is not to fight disease either. When, earlier this year, South-Africa started to make cheap medicine to slow the AIDS epidemic which had infected millions of South Africans and killed millions there and in neighboring countries, the entire pharmaceutical industry of the US rose in protest and the Clinton administration threatened economic sanctions. No matter that people are dying like flies because they can't afford the prices which the pharmaceutical multinationals are charging, intellectual property rights were infringed! If this became a common practice, so these companies say, they would be greatly discouraged from investing in the development of new medicines, and diseases would spread. Would that be any worse?

Similar examples of the crazy dilemmas which capitalism is imposing on society can be found in any sector of economic activity. The purpose of agriculture is certainly not to feed the hungry. Otherwise, how can it be explained that the most productive countries are sitting on mountains of agricultural surpluses, and are paying farmers not to farm, while each year 30 million people die of hunger and hundreds of millions suffer malnutrition?

And so on, and so on. Producing for profit, the basic rule of our society, has become truly absurd, completely irrational. To hide this absurdity has become the prime

function of all mass media and assorted ideologies. In the US, where this article happens to be written, it has become customary, even on the left, to characterize the present state of the economy as 'good times', while in fact statistics of the Congressional Budget Office show that, for the majority of Americans, net income has shrunk considerably since 1977 and homelessness and hunger have risen. Only through the window of the ruling class are we allowed to look at the world.

Profit kills. That is nothing new. It always has, throughout capitalism's history. Not because capitalism is blood-thirsty per se, but because, when faced with a choice between profit and other considerations, it doesn't hesitate. Nothing is more fundamental to this society than the drive for profit. That doesn't make us nostalgic for pre-capitalist days. For centuries, the drive for profit was also a creative force, unleashing a tremendous growth in productivity and human development, freeing mankind from the inevitability of scarcity and all its implications. Even in human thought, capitalism brought "enlightenment", the establishment of the rational progress of humanity as a conscious goal for society. The slogans "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" or "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" were never to be taken too literally and always were subordinate to the preservation of profit, but still they represented a giant step forward.

Then came the bloody turning point of 1914. Just as capitalism had enlisted all social forces in production, it now enlisted them all in destruction. The purpose remained the same: profit. More than three quarters of the war fatalities of the last 500 years have occurred since 1914. And the number grows every day, in the Balkans, in Timor, in Ethiopia, in Chechnya to name but the most recent slaughterhouses...

Something had changed drastically in the early part of this century. Through the development of science and technology and their generalized application in production, capitalism had created a system of mass production, capable of eradicating scarcity. Yet capitalism was born out of scarcity and cannot function without it. Its absence, in a capitalist context, does not mean abundance but overproduction. Because the market mechanism is based on measuring the exchange value of commodities by the social labor time that is required for their production, global

demand, purchasing power, can grow only to the degree that more labor time is expended in production. Yet the growth of supply was now no longer based so much on adding more labor-power as on subtracting it, replacing it with technology. This fundamental, insoluble contradiction between supply and demand, between the creation of real wealth and the creation of capitalist exchange-value, became a deadly threat to what capitalism is all about: profit.

The preservation of profit now required a steep loss in the exchange value of all that is traded, a drastic cheapening of capital and labor power. That's why the decadent phase of capitalism is so destructive: the greater the contradiction, the more value must disappear to make newly created value more profitable, so as to rekindle the flame of production.

Contrary to what some expected, this new phase did not spell the end of capitalism's development. Devalorization made room for new growth, reorganization and technological progress extended capitalism's scale and reach, which alleviated its contradictions. But these contradictions continued to build up subterraneanly, again forcing massive devalorization, violent destruction.

Today, capitalism's potential for extension is nearly exhausted. The global assembly line is humming but precisely because it is so productive, there's ever less room on it. Only the strongest competitors can maintain a relative prosperity, but even for them there are ominous signs as more and more capital shuns productive investment to seek refuge in financial assets, building up a bubble that is doomed to burst. The fact that a third of the global workforce, more than a billion people, cannot find work testifies to the degree to which global production is blocked by dwindling profits. More and more, the preservation of profits requires cutting corners, lowering production costs through any means possible, even when this means devastating the environment, subjecting workers to unbearable living and working conditions, or sacrificing quality, regardless of the consequences for the safety of consumers, as crumbled buildings in Turkey and dioxin-laden chickens in Belgium illustrate. In more and more places, the shrinkage of profits invite violence, corruption, and mafia practices. In the weakest, least cohesive countries, states are fracturing as different segments of the dominant class fight each other over the shrinking pie. Or else the state tries to defend its cohesion by creating, with genocidal rhetoric, a hated common enemy, a scapegoat minority. Capitalism's own crisis provides the instruments for these battles in the form of millions of uprooted people,

many of them young men who were never integrated into a working life and are vulnerable to the erotic seduction of an anything-goes culture of violence. Meanwhile, the stronger countries try to contain the rot where it threatens their own profits by intervening militarily, advancing their own particular interests against their rivals at the same time.

Left unchecked, this destructive dynamic will gather steam and engulf the world in a new holocaust. Not a replay of World War II, not one giant nuclear holocaust (although that danger can't be discounted forever) but one in which bloody conflicts multiply and combine into an unprecedented orgy of self-destruction. Some of this is explored in this issue of IP. The alternative to this grim perspective is at the same time very simple and enormously complex: to produce for human needs instead of for profit. Technically, this is more possible than ever. The fast development of information and communication technology has made it a lot easier. There is no doubt that it is feasible to create abundance in regard to the basic needs of all humans, and not just the basic needs, and to organize production so that all able-bodied people can work and there is a lot of free time for everyone -- and to find in the exploration of that leisure-time itself an endless source of creative activity. Of work, you might say, although it's not imaginable that 'work' would still resemble what it is today, when the elimination of drudgery becomes the conscious goal of society.

But what this requires above all is the conscious will of humanity to make it real, to organize and control this revolution. We believe that this will can only be forged in struggle, in revolt against the class whose existence depends on the perpetuation of the absurdity of production for profit. Only the autonomous struggle of the working class, the great majority of society whose work makes the wheels of the world economy turn and whose will can stop them and change their direction, provides this hope. But the working class cannot realize its potential until it puts itself in the picture. To see what it can do, it must see itself.

We revolutionaries are here and must come together to tear away the curtains of ideology that hide the absurdity and truly horrendous perspective of continued capitalist rule, and to hold a mirror to the proletariat: see clearly, see the danger, see yourself, see your power. Recognize the necessity and the possibility. They're here. Now.

Sander

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# THE LESSONS OF THE WAR IN KOSOVO

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In this issue of *IP*, we are publishing a series of contributions on the war in Kosovo. They are the product of the public meeting which we held in Paris just before the Summer, and it is the richness of the debate there that we hope to make accessible to the political milieu. The first article is the general analysis of our group, presented at the beginning of that meeting. There follow a series of interventions by comrades outside our group, and then interventions by the comrades of *Internationalist Perspective*, which develop their own analysis of the war or which complement the general analysis.

All of the contributions are in agreement in their unqualified denunciation of the war as a manifestation of capitalist barbarism, as well as of the 'humanitarian' mantle in which the bourgeoisie draped its operation in Kosovo. Nonetheless, different nuances exist with respect to the appreciation of the direct causes which brought about the unleashing of the intervention. That leads us to another debate, raised in the texts which follow, but which requires further development: the updating of our very framework for the understanding of military conflicts in capitalism today. Since the collapse of the Russian bloc, the schema which has prevailed since the division of the world into two antagonistic imperialist blocs is no longer valid. We are now confronted, at one and the same time, by an exacerbation of imperialist tensions under the impact of the world economic crisis, and by the brutal hegemony of the American bloc. We need to integrate these elements into a framework for the analysis of military conflicts: American domination, linked to the implications of the process of globalization, and that on the basis of growing imperialist rivalries. As several of the texts emphasize, it is no longer possible to understand things on the basis of the frameworks valid in the past, and on this question, as on so many others, we call on all of our readers to respond to us with their own views.

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## SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM

On March 23, 1999, the United States began its bombardment of Serbia. Following the defeat of diplomacy, and for the first time since the Second World War, an armed conflict exploded in the heart of Europe, and was brought about by the direct military intervention of the US. It is the significance of that event, as well as all the questions which it raises, that compel us to focus on its meaning. In particular, it is crucial that we denounce the 'humanitarian' cloak in which that war was wrapped. The continuation of communal violence, this time perpetrated not by the Serbs against the Albanians, but by Albanians against Serbs and Gypsies, proves that these conflicts between ethnic communities are the reflection of the acute tensions which consume the Balkans, and which military intervention only exacerbates, fanning the flames of vengeance. Above all, the sudden discovery of genocidal practices on the part of the Serbs permitted the US, under the cover of the defense of the oppressed, to unleash a murderous war, the sole goal of which was to shore up their economic and hegemonic interests. The massacres of whole populations in Rwanda, or dozens of other places

throughout the world, only moves the great powers when their interests are directly threatened. An intervention for 'humanitarian reasons', thus has the advantage of throwing up a smokescreen over the reality of war, and preventing an opposition movement to its prosecution (who would dare support a butcher, and leave a massacred people to their grisly fate?). It thereby makes it possible to justify capitalist barbarism without the time that would otherwise be wasted, when war and the crushing of a population seem to be the most direct route to the defense of its vital interests.

In general terms, we need to situate imperialist conflicts, as well as the kinds of destabilization currently faced by a series of countries or regions of the world, within the framework of the decadence of capitalism; that is to say, the increase in the economic contradictions in which the capitalist system is inextricably entangled. The deepening of the world economic crisis creates a multiplication of local conflicts opposing segments of the bourgeoisie in murderous conflicts for a piece of an ever-shrinking pie. In a sense, the capitalist world has

increasingly come to resemble the raft of the Medusa, where the strongest devour the weakest, in a competitive struggle to save themselves.

The present era is thus characterized by a dual tendency: the first is that of globalization, as an attempt to respond to the economic contradictions, and which entails a growing inter-dependence, a movement towards the integration of capital entities; the other is a fragmentation, which manifests the divergent interests of the various segments of the bourgeoisie, and the loss of the coherence of the political structures of decadent capitalism. The multiplication of local, ethnic, and other conflicts as manifestations of the growing contradictions of the system, but also as an ideological response of the bourgeoisie so as to divert growing social tensions, are inscribed in this very dynamic. The perspective of "socialism or barbarism" ceases to be an abstract formulation, and instead makes itself increasingly felt in the actual life of the exploited classes.

As a victim of the development of economic contradictions, the Russian bloc collapsed, allowing the hegemony of the American bloc to be asserted in a striking fashion. At the present time, even if imperialist tensions are on the rise, we do not see the constitution of new imperialist blocs, even if potential competitors are not lacking. Logically, the basic strategy of the United States is to prevent the emergence of new competing imperialist poles, by consolidating its power and role as world policeman. This strategy entails, among other things, the strengthening of its control over zones which are crucial to its strategic and economic interests, and preventing any destabilization which could threaten these interests by being utilized by its potential rivals. The systematic crushing of Iraq by the embargo, controls, and aerial bombardment, is one example of this. The war in Kosovo is another. In addition, since the intervention in Kosovo, NATO has assumed a new role. It is no longer only - as in the past - an organ for defense against aggression (from the Russian bloc), but has now become a tool to control, and to directly intervene in, conflicts in zones which are hot spots. The Americans are the world policeman, and NATO is their bludgeon.

## And Yugoslavia ?

The pressure that the US has exercised over Yugoslavia of late, with the political division of the Yugoslav Federation, with the sending of NATO troops to

Bosnia, and with the direct military intervention in Kosovo, has been provoked by the necessity to react to the growing destabilization of a zone which is crucial to it. Modern Yugoslavia was created as a buffer against Germany after the First World War. This mission continued after the Second World War (this time between the American and Russian blocs), and the Yugoslav state, situated between the two contending blocs, was therefore constituted by an agglomeration of different regions and peoples. The existence of these two blocs, the relative absence of the pressure of an economic crisis, as well as the political cement represented by Tito, made it possible for these diverse communities to live together in a relatively stable political and social framework.

The death of Tito, the collapse of the Russian bloc, and the deepening of the world economic crisis, occasioned the breakdown of that artificial political framework. Communal tensions then deepened in that disparate, multi-ethnic, state, an outcome encouraged by the local bourgeoisies, which used them to ideologically divert the growing social tensions. We must not lose sight of the fact that Yugoslavia has periodically been shaken by powerful movements of working class struggle.

What exactly was the situation in Serbia at the time of the abortive Rambouillet accords? On the military plane, it possessed a powerful army, or one that, at any rate, was more powerful than those of its neighboring republics. On the economic plane, its situation was desperate, with 80% of its enterprises operating at a loss, an unemployment rate of 27%, a monthly wage far below that in the neighboring republics, with all the social tensions that such a situation entails. In addition Serbia had to respond to the separatist demands of the Albanians in Kosovo, demands which also affected other republics, inasmuch as the dream of a greater Albania entailed the union of Kosovo, Albania, and parts of both Montenegro and Macedonia. For all these reasons, within the Yugoslav Federation, Serbia represented a site of disequilibrium, threatening the fragile edifice of the whole of the ex-Yugoslavia, and indeed, the Balkans.

Moreover, the Balkans are situated in the heart of the industrialized capitalist world. This region is a confluence of economic interests which are very important for the Americans and Europeans, especially by way of the pipelines supplying the West with its gas and oil across the Black Sea. Those economic interests were threatened by the growing destabilization which risked spreading to all the countries and regions of this zone: the Voivodina, the Krajina, Macedonia, among others - all of which were already in a fragile state.

The reasons for the military intervention on the part of the American bloc are therefore clear: it was a matter of defending vital economic and political interests, by preventing the region from being set ablaze, the risk of which was great because of Serb military power, in combination with its tense economic and ethnic situation.

Once again, we can compare this intervention with the American position on Iraq: it was necessary to clip the wings of the Serb rulers, like those of Saddam Hussein, and to impose direct control by force of arms in a strategically vital, and tumultuous, region. It is, therefore, clear that if the opposition between local imperialisms is at the heart of the chronic instability of this region, it is not the offensive attitude of a state like Serbia that explains the outbreak of the war in Kosovo, but rather the necessity for the Americans to maintain their imperialist hegemony by eliminating the present instability. The American interest involves three elements: first, the necessity to reaffirm to the rest of the world their role as the dominant economic power; second, the necessity to prevent any destabilization -- political, economic, or social -- from which any potential rival imperialists could benefit; third, the preservation of economic interests concretized in the construction of gas and oil pipelines in the Black Sea and Balkan region. We have here the reasons for the unleashing of many conflicts in the present period, which situates the intervention in Kosovo not in the framework of an humanitarian decision, but rather a clear-cut defense of strategic and economic interests.

## What does the war show us ?

This war, shamelessly presented as a humanitarian operation, was supposed to quickly lead to the restoration of order in the region. Nonetheless, despite the power demonstrated by the US, it was not able to establish complete control on the ground. This is both a reflection of the deeply rooted tensions which consume the region, and the impossibility of finding a genuine solution to them. What was supposed to have been a straightforward military intervention has come up against the fact that the conflict on the ground has developed its own dynamic. After two months of warfare, the American bloc found itself confronted by a Hobson's choice: either accept the limited effects of its military operation (which had not brought about the destruction of the Serb military, or the removal of Milosevic), or decide on an extension of the war with a land campaign, and all the risks that that entailed. Despite the apparent unity of the Western bloc, the expansion of the conflict would probably have threatened that unanimity of purpose, which barely papered over real divergences over the means to be used. Besides, it would have necessitated the mobilization of large numbers of ground troops, which it would have been extremely difficult to make the civilian population accept. In addition to which there was the real risk that a land campaign would have become a real quagmire, as was Vietnam for the Americans, and Afghanistan for the Russians. Finally, but not the least factor, the continuation of the war risked provoking the very thing the US sought to prevent: the renewal of conflicts in the fragile republics surrounding Serbia, and the development of an uncontrollable situation via the massive displacement of refugees which the war would have dispersed throughout Europe. Even the most powerful

bourgeoisie, in the assertion of its hegemony, comes up against profound contradictions which undermine its order, and which are reflected in the growing instability of its political structures, leading to a situation where it becomes impossible to attain the goals which it seeks.

This conflict also emphasized, if that was not already clear, the incapacity of Russia to assume its old role as imperialist leader and defender of its 'natural' allies, as well as its dependence on the economic support of the dominant world institutions. Its weakness as an imperialist leader continues to be made manifest, as the growing instability in the Caucasus, and Russia's difficulty in dealing with it, demonstrates. Even if the Russians attempted to save face by putting themselves forward as interlocutors in the negotiations with Milosevic, their attitude can be summarized in the phrase: "Much ado about nothing." It is probable that Milosevic expected much more on the part of his traditional ally. Thus, a secondary gain for the US in this war was its accentuation of the weakness of Russia, which had to accede to the establishment of new American military bases in the region, including those in Albania, only recently a bastion of "communism."

Another important factor in this war is that it has demonstrated the complete military dependence of Europe on the United States. And the minor coup brought off by the Russian occupation troops in controlling a few bits of Kosovo on their own, in no way contradicts this dependence. Nor is this dependence contradicted by the fact that we seem to be now moving towards the creation of a European military intervention force.

A final point raised by the war in Kosovo, concerns the ideological campaign waged by the bourgeoisie, and the absence of a significant reaction by our class. That ideological campaign has been very effective, and should teach us something about the capacity of our class enemy to silence any opposition. The bourgeoisie has succeeded in militarily intervening in the very heart of Europe, all the while presenting the war and forced military occupation as a humanitarian reaction, as a war which was not really a war, and as an occupation for the good of the population affected. All of which constitutes an important threshold which the bourgeoisie has been able to cross. As on other occasions, the world bourgeoisie has utilized the very powerful emotional impact of a situation (the distress of an oppressed community, hunted, despoiled), touching a real nerve in society: in the midst of a generalized insecurity, everyone feels oppression, feels themselves threatened by arbitrary power, by the danger of exclusion, by the risk of losing everything from one day to the next. The theme chosen by the bourgeoisie, and the images broadcast by the media, have been carefully selected for maximum impact, right down to the mass graves unearthed by KFOR, and which have thus confirmed the 'necessity' of this intervention and occupation by the West. With respect to the danger of a reaction that this intervention and occupation risked provoking in the countries engaged in the

military campaign, the bourgeoisie has canalized it in a preventive fashion into an international pseudo-solidarity.

Confronted by this military conflict, there was very little reaction on the part of the working class. Some anti-war demonstrations occurred, but these were closely controlled, canalized, and thereby neutralized in a pacifist direction. At the time of writing, the ideological diversion continues by way of a campaign of demonstrations organized against the outlaw Milosevic, and in favor of his opponents in the ruling class. The images of a bloody dictator against democracy are, once again, being wielded by the world bourgeoisie. Against this harmonious concert, we can point to an element of real dissonance: the growing desertions within the "valiant" Serb army which occurred throughout the conflict. That Serb army, which Milosevic said would fight to the last man, thereby showing its undaunted patriotism, has not, in fact, demonstrated its enthusiasm to fight for the defense of Serbian nationalism. In addition, demonstrations by Serbian mothers, protesting against the mobilization of their sons, have occurred with increasing frequency. A final point can provide us with an idea of the real ideological stakes of this conflict, even if the lesson it provides concerns what the bourgeoisie didn't do. It concerns the prudence with which the world bourgeoisie confronted the prospect of a ground campaign against the Serbs. Throughout the conflict, it was professional armies that were engaged, and there was no mobilization of the population at large. Moreover, the troops engaged fought from the air, taking great precautions to remain out of range of the Serbian anti-aircraft defences, so that there would be no casualties, while the ground troops were kept occupied in building refugee camps, and engaged in providing assistance to civilians.

It is always difficult to gauge the degree of class consciousness on the part of workers outside of their open struggles. But, the factors to which we have just pointed make it clear that our class has not been led into the trap of ethnic hatred towards which the bourgeoisie sought to direct it. That being said, one can only regret the absence of an open reaction of opposition to the war on a class basis, and attempt to understand the reasons for it. In that regard, two hypotheses can be advanced. The first is that the working class only reacts when it is directly affected. The fact that the war was presented as a technical and abstract operation, and not as an engagement of men against other men, confirms this view. In addition, one can ask what impact the situation of war, and permanent violence within capitalist society, has on class consciousness, and therefore, on the capacity to denounce an armed conflict.

## In conclusion

We must ask whether or not the American objective of the stabilization of the Balkans has, in fact, been achieved. The American and allied bombardments have demonstrated

the military supremacy of the United States, their capacity to consolidate that supremacy by any means necessary, as well as the dynamism common to the Americans and Europeans in this situation. However, the need to install an armed force in this region, as was already the case in Bosnia, also demonstrates the incapacity of the bourgeoisie to find a real solution to the tensions and contradictions which make the Balkans a powder keg. These two contradictory tendencies, indicative of the bourgeoisie's strengths and weaknesses, underline the historic perspective in which we now find ourselves: that of a world system riven by its internal contradictions, more and more caught in a dead end, without any solution, and compelled to find brutal remedies in a vain effort to ward off the devastating effects of its global political and economic breakdown.

The end result of this historic perspective also appears more and more clearly through the historic alternative of socialism or barbarism. The capitalist system openly reveals its historic limits, and what it is capable of doing to maintain its precarious equilibrium. Confronted by an inexorable intensification of its economic contradictions, the future that it provides will entail the massive development of poverty, and famine, in the Third World. The sole means that capital has at its disposal to control the reactions of opposition and revolt in the face of this inevitable deterioration of the conditions of existence of vast populations, is to divert those reactions into opposition between rival (ethnic, religious, linguistic) communities, or to intervene violently on the ground to silence by arms any popular upheaval.

The war in Kosovo has sadly demonstrated this global historic tendency. The strongest bourgeoisie is ready for anything to safeguard its economic interests and preserve its imperialist hegemony. Its weapons are both those of war and ideological diversion; this latter turning men and women united in the same condition of misery and exploitation, one against the other. It is no longer hindered either by the flag of defense against an aggressor, nor by the mantle of democratic institutions: it acts anywhere its interests are threatened. Confronted by such a perspective, only the exploited class is able to bar the way to the unleashing of this barbarism, by destroying a world system which brings only military, economic, or ecological destruction, and constructing a society responding to the needs of humanity.

Rose

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# A LEAFLET TO DENOUNCE THE WAR

The comrades of Internationalist Perspective have asked us to present the leaflet that our discussion circle made about the war in Kosovo. Perhaps, the best way to present it is to explain why we made it. Two essential reasons motivated us: the importance of the question of war for the proletariat in general and the importance of the current war in Kosovo in particular. War has always been an enormously important question for the proletariat and for all exploited classes in general. It constitutes the ultimate degree of capitalist exploitation and oppression. It's no longer just labor which capital demands from the exploited, but their very life or that of their children. It's "the blood tax" as the old popular expression goes.

Wars starkly reveal on which side in the class struggle a political force is situated. War makes clear, in particular among the many organizations which pretend to be on the side of the exploited classes, who capitulates, at the moment of truth, to the demands of the system of exploitation, and who refuses them; who calls for the submission to the dominant classes and who calls for revolt against them and their system. During the First World War, it was the question of participation in the war which determined the forces that would participate in the first international revolutionary wave. It was this question which revealed to what point the Social-Democratic parties had putrefied and which put the internationalist left of the Second International (Spartacists, Bolsheviks etc.) and the anarchists of the American IWW or the Spanish CNT of that time in the same camp. Even though these currents had different analyses of the reasons which had pushed the different national factions of the bourgeoisie of the world into this conflict, they all shared the same refusal to support it and the conviction of the necessity of destroying this system to put an end to its barbarism.

War is the extreme form of the competitive logic of capitalism, of a system based on private property, on profit, on commercial and financial competition. That's why all real opposition to war poses the question of the destruction of capitalism itself. That's why anybody who considers himself a revolutionary cannot remain indifferent, silent in the face of the reality of capitalist war.

The war in Kosovo is no world war, but it has a particular importance due to its geographic location, to the involvement of the most powerful countries, and to the dimensions of the destruction that it causes. Since the Second World War, capitalism has continuously spawned wars, but they mostly occurred on the periphery of its system. The war in Kosovo on the other hand, takes place

in Europe itself, in the foothills of the oldest and largest concentrations of workers in the world. What's more, in the current conflict, the governments and armies of the most modern and industrialized powers intervene directly, headed by the principal amongst them: the US. For the first time since the last world war, Germany, the strongest European power, is deploying its troops beyond its borders, thus marking the end of an era. The importance of this war lies also in the vastness of the destruction that it wrought. The entire economic infrastructure of a European country was razed, and that too is without precedent since the last world war. And the historical gravity of the situation would rise to a much higher degree if the NATO forces would embark on an invasion with ground troops.

In the face of such an event, revolutionaries have a responsibility that does not allow them to remain silent. Their first task is to denounce the lies in the name of which this war is waged. If you had to sum up this century, now virtually over, in a single word, "lie" would surely be among the most appropriate. Over the course of this century, the ruling classes have developed the most gigantic means of consciousness-manipulation, and the explosion of global means of communications have only reinforced them. After the lies about 'socialist countries', after the lies about wars of national liberation and 'the right of self-determination', after the lies about the defense of 'human rights', this century ends with the lie of humanitarian wars. The same powers which justify this war with 'humanitarian' rhetoric, are responsible for current or recent massacres and genocides. Thus, for many years American capital has unconditionally supported the massacres of the Kurdish population by the Turkish government. Meanwhile, the Russian government does not hesitate to slaughter civilians in the wars which it wages in the Caucasus. French capital is responsible for the genocide of more than half a million Tutsis in Rwanda, and so on.

The real motivations of the powers in this war have nothing to do with humanitarian concerns for the civilian population. The diplomacy of states is by definition secret: secret for other states, whether enemies or 'allies' (as the current protests of the European governments about the jealously guarded military secrets of their American 'ally' illustrate). But it is above all secret for the population in general and the exploited in particular. From the outside, it is impossible to know with certainty what goes on in the minds of the gangsters who rule the world. But it is possible to understand the guidelines of their

behavior, from the point of view of the defense of their interests.

Historically, over the course of this century, the Balkans have been a 'privileged' site of confrontation between the great capitalist powers. Wars in the Balkans prepared and announced the First World War, triggered by the famous assassination in Sarajevo. During the Second World War, confrontations between the powers, through intermediary local nationalisms as well as direct intervention by the Axis-powers, killed more than a million people in the Balkans. At the end of that war, Russia and the West divided Yugoslavia "fifty-fifty", to use the words of Stalin reported by Churchill in his autobiography. When the collapse of the USSR at the end of the eighties overthrew the old global balance, the door was opened to new re-divisions. From 1991 on, Germany opened fire by imposing the independence, first of Slovenia and then of Croatia. With the support of France, the UK and Russia, Serbia responded with a war that ended only to make way for another, equally murderous one, whose goal was the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the US directly jumped into the fray. After five years of war, more than 250 000 people were killed and 3 million were displaced.

The new war over Kosovo is but the continuation of these confrontations in which the great powers try, always in the name of their 'humanitarian' concerns, to expand their zones of influence. This time, it's the US that has taken the initiative and assumes the bulk of the military operations. It forced its NATO 'allies' to participate in a war which has as one of its primary objectives to strengthen America's position over that of its new and main imperialist rival: Europe. Ex-Yugoslavia is sitting on the crossroads of Western Europe, the Middle East and Russia's zone of influence. It's a 'crucial strategic area' as

the sinister Yeltsin recently reminded us without any 'humanitarian' flourishes. To these motivations must be added, on the part of the US, the objective of creating its own zone of military presence in Europe, as well as the desire of Europe, headed by Germany, to establish a unified armed force, autonomous from the US, as the Greens clamor for in the words of Fisher or Cohn-Bendit.

But the powers in this conflict are not only motivated by military-strategic concerns. Since the collapse of the old Russian empire, the oil reserves of the Caspian sea have become a major lure, from which the Western powers (but also local ones like Turkey and Iran) are determined to draw a profit. American capital in particular is developing enormous projects for the exploitation of these reserves, and these projects require the establishment of a secure zone in which the oil and gas can travel over the Black sea to the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. From this perspective, the weakening of one of the last Russian allies in the Balkans, Serbia, is a first rate necessity. The real motivations of the powers in this conflict, their long-, middle- or short-term strategic objectives, their struggle to grab the remains of a collapsed empire, their greed for new oil riches, none of these has anything to do with their humanitarian rhetoric. This is a capitalist war in which the proletarians, and all the exploited, can only be cannon fodder or the victims of bombings and massive destruction; this is a war which is the product of the capitalist system. The response it demands is not the utopian dream of a peaceful capitalism, but the destruction of capitalism itself. That's what the proletarians of the entire world must be conscious of. That's what revolutionaries must affirm with all their might. That's why we made a leaflet.

Raoul

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## A BIT OF HISTORY ...

It is simplistic and reductionist to see the events in the Balkans as the mere result of the doings of the great powers who supposedly pull all the strings. While it is true that the most powerful capitalist countries have often fueled the fire of war in this region, the local bourgeoisies have also defended their own interests with tenacity. To see only the actions of the big states or, conversely, to notice only the local rivalries, leads in both cases to a partial analysis. It is rather this concomitance which makes it possible to decipher the reality of the Balkans. For more than a century, the framework of the tragedy of the

Balkans consists of the interlocking of struggles for the defense of local and outside state interests.

Without going back too far, this analysis is verified since 1875, when there was a general uprising of the Christian nations of the Balkans against the Ottoman empire, "the sick man" of Europe, which was incapable of suppressing it. The process of nations becoming independent and thus breaking up, which had begun already in 1820-30, first in Greece and then in Serbia, became general in the last quarter of the 19th century. Of course the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, German, British

and French states were all fanning the flames, and whipping up the already virulent Balkan nationalism. But this nationalism wasn't created from scratch by the Machiavellian plans of the great powers. All over Europe, the strong and seductive idea of the Nation-state triumphed in the 19th century. Stimulated by the French revolution and the Napoleonic empire, and relayed by the local elites, it didn't spare the Balkans. In 1876, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey. In 1878, the whole area was redivided at the conference of Berlin. The independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania was confirmed, Bulgaria was created and Bosnia-Herzegovina was occupied by Austria-Hungary. But these new borders were quickly contested by local bourgeoisies, left unsatisfied and eager to unstitch them again. Thus in 1912, these new nations (Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Bulgaria) forced Turkey to abandon its last European territories (Albania, Macedonia and Thrace). That was the first Balkan war. But the following year Bulgaria, which felt shortchanged by the division, declared war on its former allies. That was the second Balkan war. The Pan-Slavic nationalism of the Serbs, which was responsible for the assassination of the Austrian crown prince in Sarajevo, triggered the third Balkan war that unleashed the First World War. While none of the big powers remained aloof (after benefiting from Russian support, from 1912 on, Bulgaria leaned on Germany, and Serbia on France and Russia), the appetite of the small, local sharks should not be underestimated either. To see the big capitalist states as deft puppet-masters who control everything is at the least very schematic.

After 1918, the Austro-Hungarian empire was dismembered to prevent a renewal of a military bloc based on Germany. This led to the creation of Yugoslavia, but the new state soon had serious internal troubles. Already in the 1920's, the Croatian bourgeoisie resisted Serbian centralism. In 1934, the Yugoslav king, Alexander, was killed by a Croatian nationalist. Without those profound internal national divisions, it wouldn't have been so easy for Hitler to create a Croatian satellite state, hostile to Serbia. The reconstitution of Yugoslavia after 1945 under Tito only 'froze' the problem in place for a while. The bankruptcy of the planned economies, the disparities in development which were never overcome, and the explosion of nationalisms in the USSR at the end of the 1980's, rekindled a "greater Serbian" nationalism which the other nationalities in the Yugoslav federation were no longer willing to accept. Here again, the solid support of Germany for the independence of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 only accelerated a process that had already begun. Neither the internal aspects nor the external factors should be neglected.

The same is true for Kosovo. The policy of Milosevic created more than one problem, not in regard to human rights questions but because it created a hotbed of instability in an already very sensitive area. The exodus of Albanians grew dramatically because of the NATO

bombardments, but it had begun before that (close to 200 000 Kosovars had already fled before the war started). The question of the displaced people, and the burgeoning migratory pressure, worried the European states. For them it's far better to create an enclave in the Balkans than to have two million displaced people wandering about in the heart of Europe. Some speak about the need to control a region through which pipelines could bring oil from the Caspian sea. Why not? Also, we can't neglect the fact that Belgrade always had privileged ties with Moscow. The military intervention is thus also aimed at drastically reducing Russia's influence, at putting this zone firmly under American-European control.

Finally, and most importantly, it seems to me that, in the context of the future constitution of a European defense, the European states cannot remain passive to a conflict on their terrain. Their international credibility is at stake. For the first time since 1945, the majority of European states have waged war together, with the very notable participation of Germany. They have committed a crime together. As Bismarck said last century about the unification of Germany, "it can only be accomplished with blood and iron". What the battle of Sadowa against Austria in 1866, and the victories against France in 1870, did for German unity, the war in Kosovo could be for the realization of Europe's military unity. Wars often seal common destinies. But Europe lacked the military means to intervene on its own, so it had to ask help from the US. The European leaders have done all they could to make the US intervene militarily, even before the conference of Rambouillet. And the American bourgeoisie has of course no interest in seeing chaos develop in Europe. To a certain extent, it can even encourage the creation of an autonomous European defense. From Russia, India, Pakistan and China, other imperialisms are threatening. Tomorrow, the US and Europe may have to close ranks in some situations. Who knows? Of course this does not mean that there will never be confrontations between the US and Europe. But to already see in the Kosovo situation - as does the ICC - such a trial of strength between them, is quite premature. It's not enough that the theory grasp real tendencies, it also must explain the actual reality.

Greg

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# THE WAR IN KOSOVO AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE CURRENT TRAJECTORY OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM

As a manifestation of the current trajectory of global capitalism, the war in Kosovo expresses its main traits and its main contradictions. It reveals, once again, the incapacity of the classic theories to explain today's world. On the one hand, the dominant ideology of the capitalist class sees in capital only its capacity to increase society's wealth and productive forces, to go relentlessly forward on the radiant path of "progress", and it dismisses the wars, the genocides, the famines and other catastrophes as aberrations caused by old ethnic hatreds, by the irrationality of certain leaders, or by nature. On the other hand, the classic theories of the decadence of capitalism, developed by a certain number of Marxist revolutionary currents in this century, counter this with a vision of a world where the markets are saturated, where the productive forces no longer grow, or grow much slower than before, and where every national capital is hurled into a ruthless competitive struggle with all others and in an imperialist policy of military conquest of the markets and territories occupied by its competitors. It's this vision which culminates today in the ICC's theory of the decomposition of capitalism. It's a vision of a deadlocked world, rotting on the spot, in which the call is 'everyone for himself'.

But the war in Kosovo and the world in general do not conform to either vision. On one hand, in a large part of the planet there is economic collapse, war, displacements, which are not mere transient aberrations but result from the very logic of international capitalism, and affect the great capitalist powers. On the other hand, there is the manifest agreement between these powers on the war over Kosovo as well as on the general international economic orientation; and the expression of the power of capital in these countries, which succeeded in waging war without a military mobilization of their populations and without any immediate detrimental effect on their economies, and without running into trouble ideologically, at least for the time being, is patently clear too.

As we have tried to explain in recent issues of *Internationalist Perspective*, the decadence of capitalism cannot manifest itself by a halt in the development of the productive forces, because accumulation is one of Capital's inherent, irrepressible tendencies. This

decadence manifests itself rather through the exacerbation of capitalism's contradictions, through a growing conflict between the existing productive forces and relations of production, between the potentialities offered by the development of the productive forces and their restricted and regressive utilization. In decadence, the dynamic of capital is no longer one of harmonious development, and what replaces it is not permanent stagnation but a double movement of development and destruction which condition one another.

The origin of the current conflict over Kosovo is to be found in the world order that emerged from the collapse of the Russian bloc ten years ago, and the origin of that collapse itself lies in the economic evolution of capital since the last world war, and in particular in the pronounced tendency towards the globalization of capital in the last two decades. A strictly military interpretation of the Kosovo war, as well as of the collapse of the Russian bloc, is totally incapable of explaining the current tendencies of global capital. The Russian bloc collapsed without one shot being fired; it was, first of all, an economic fact. Faced with the ever more global development of Western capital, the Russian bloc became an increasingly artificial bulwark, incapable of keeping up with economic, technological, and therefore also military, competition with the West. A national capital can postpone the hour of reckoning through economic planning and the regulation of exchanges, but sooner or later the law of value imposes its sanction. In this sense, it can be said that it was the globalization of capital that definitively swept the Russian bloc away. But the collapse of that bloc has in its turn accelerated the globalization of capital, which has progressed incessantly in the last decade. This globalization has given the most developed capitals a powerful means to counter the tendential decline of their profit rates and to pursue their expansion, despite the economic crisis which has gripped the world for the past thirty years, by enlarging the world market, by giving them access to cheap labor power and by giving them a new source of surplus profit. Surplus profit, in particular, to a large extent provides the basis for the accumulation of capital for the strongest economies today. But surplus profits for some necessarily imply lesser profits for others: surplus profit does not result from the creation of new value, but from the fact that the market redistributes the

value that is created in such a way that the most technologically advanced capitals, those with the highest organic composition, obtain more surplus value than what they themselves extract, while the others get less. Thus, the globalization of capital means a gigantic transfer of value from the poorer economies to the richer, especially the US. This explains why its inevitable consequence is at the same time the enrichment of the most developed capitals and the impoverishment of the least developed capitals; on the one hand, development, on the other, underdevelopment and disintegration. So the globalization of capital, in this period of growing economic contradictions, clearly shows the double movement of development and destruction which characterizes decadent capitalism: development for the richest capitals, disintegration of the poorest. This explains why, on one hand, the Russian bloc has collapsed, and Africa agonizes, with no end in sight; while on the other hand, the reshuffling of the cards on an international scale, made possible by the collapse of the Russian bloc, has not led to a disappearance of the Western bloc nor to a rapid escalation of imperialist conflicts between the big Western powers. The globalization that triggered the collapse of the Russian bloc continued after this collapse, and the most developed capitals collectively benefit from this, which prevents them from adopting a protectionist, 'every man for himself' policy.

Many revolutionaries are in the habit of painting the relations between capitalists and national capitals as a deadly struggle between rival gangs that stand ready to wipe each other out on the smallest pretext. There can be no doubt that competition is an essential characteristic of capitalism. But at the same time, every social system is built on a certain degree of cooperation. In capitalism, this takes the form of exchanges. As long as the exchange is the source of profit, a capitalist or national capital has no interest in making this source of profit disappear. Again, the dynamic of capital is a contradictory one, in which competition and cooperation are enmeshed, with one or the other of these forms of relation assuming the upper hand, depending on the general conditions. The continuation of the globalization of capital after the collapse of the Russian bloc, therefore, maintained the cohesion of the Western bloc, contrary to the dogmatic vision of a group like the ICC, for whom the collapse of one bloc means the automatic disintegration of the other.

For the long term, one can predict with a reasonable degree of certitude that the present situation will not last, because of the increased competition that will accompany the already perceptible obstacles to the continued globalization of capital, and the appearance of open crisis in the principal centers of capitalism. It is possible that this competition will result in the constitution of new imperialist blocs. However, for the moment, that is not

what is happening. To see the hand of the Germans in opposition to the Americans behind every conflict is to be led astray. In the war in Kosovo, Germany like the other European countries, has collaborated with the US behind a shared objective, and this despite their sometimes divergent particular interests.

Nonetheless, this in no way means that the war in Kosovo lacks an imperialist dimension. However, the present imperialist policy does not revolve around territorial conquest, as in the past, but rather around control of globalized capital. In the Kosovo war, as in the Iraq war, it's a matter not only of keeping order in a region to the benefit of Western capital as a whole, but also of determining who will be (or will continue to be) the principal beneficiary of the globalization of capital. At a time when Europe seeks to (at least partially) free itself from its monetary tutelage to the American dollar through the creation of the euro, the present imperialist policy of the US seeks to keep Europe and the other countries under its military tutelage so as to preserve its world hegemony. For the moment, Europe, and Japan, lack both the ambition and the means to oppose the US on a global level, but seek rather to improve their economic positions, and to increase their role in the common military apparatus. This is particularly the case for Germany, which has profited from the collapse of the Russian bloc to take control of a significant portion of the East European economies through the export of capital, and to now participate in a military operation for the first time since the Second World War.

Finally, all this has implications for the class struggle. Despite the slow development of the economic crisis and its considerable social consequences over the past thirty years, notably under the form of unemployment and social marginalization, the crisis has yet to strike the very heart of capitalism (the US, Europe, Japan) full blast. The war in Kosovo is being waged by professional armies, wielding sophisticated weapons, and, for the moment, does not directly affect the proletariat of the West, either physically (through the death of large numbers of soldiers), or economically (through a general reduction in wages or the lengthening of the working week). The relative economic strength of these countries still allows the capitalist class to pursue its imperialist goals under the appearance of a humanitarian operation. If the democratic and humanitarian ideology that shackles the proletariat of the West is indeed alarming, it still needs to be said that for the moment it rests on real material foundations that one can ignore only under pain of falling into vain recriminations, or demoralization – each of which are the marks of impotence.

M. Lazare

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# A STRANGE WAR

The war in Kosovo was a 'strange war' in more than one respect: with respect to the avowed goal of protecting the Albanians and toppling Milosevic, and with respect to the feelings of the people in the West about actually 'being at war'.

1. A strange war, whose official goal was to protect the Albanians in Kosovo yet whose first effect was to send this population fleeing under the pressure of the Serbian army, which continued to advance despite the bombings. A strange war, in which the avowed enemy, Milosevic, is still solidly in place after two and a half months of bombing.

It's not the first time that such a scenario has unfolded. During the war against Iraq, officially waged against Saddam Hussein, Iraq was bombed, ten thousands civilians were killed and many more died afterwards as a result of the economic embargo, but...Saddam Hussein is still in place. He probably represents an acceptable compromise for the US. The same could be true for Milosevic. Does that mean that there is no real conflict between the US and Milosevic, that all this is one big charade between the representatives of capital, including Milosevic, as Alma claimed at this meeting? I don't think so. Even though Milosevic draws certain benefits from being attacked by the US, inasmuch as it allows him to create national unity around him, it is hard to imagine that the systematic destruction of the centers of the Serb economy (electricity, roads, bridges, military centers) is to his advantage. All this will have to be reconstructed after the war. Western aid will be indispensable for this reconstruction, and it will undoubtedly come loaded with conditions Serbia will have to accept. Even if what is reconstructed will be more modern than what was destroyed, nothing guarantees that the reconstruction will be as vast as the destruction. The war over Kosovo was not the result of an understanding between the US and Milosevic (for what purpose? - to destroy capital?). But Alma is right when she says that the war was not directed against Milosevic as a leader, and that its purpose was not the conquest of territory (and even less the protection of its inhabitants). The conflicts of this decade and the next one

must be understood in a larger context, defined by the will of the dominant capital (that is, American capital) to assure the means of its hegemony. They correspond to a policy of militarism as a means to assure economic domination in a time of crisis. According to *Le Monde Diplomatique*, a principal goal of the military policy of the US is to give itself the financial, diplomatic, political and military capacity to intervene quickly anywhere on the planet, whether in a conflict or for another reason. This implies neither being limited by the vetos of other countries (and thus bypassing the UN), nor by distance from the theater (and thus creating more military bases around the world). It also implies that weapons, jets, logistical capacities, must be tested, so that they can be improved. The war over Kosovo corresponds to those needs, as did the continuation of the bombings in Iraq. The interesting question, for the future, is against which potential rival the US is strengthening its fortress. According to *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the rise of China is seen as the main long-term threat.

2. It was also a strange war in regard to the population of the Western countries. No NATO country has declared war on Serbia and yet they all participate in the war against it. There has been no vote in the parliaments and yet all governments support the NATO action to a greater or lesser degree. France, Germany, Britain, the US, etc., 'are at war', but how is it perceived? We are in the midst of a paradox, of surrealism even: we pay for the bombs which destroy Serbia and which chase the Albanians out of Kosovo, and at the same time we collect money and food to help these same Albanians! Aggressors without realizing it and ready to help the victims! It would be hard to find a more blatant indicator of the ideological power of the capitalist system, of its capacity to direct people's reflections. No room for the expression of opposition to the war, since the question was never raised in the political debate.

Adele

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# CAPITALIST ORDER REIGNS IN KOSOVO

1. Two distinct tendencies are presently at work in Europe: the first is the tendency towards the **globalization** of capital, a phenomenon directed by the United States **and** by the Europeans (dominated by the Germans) together; the second is represented by the ruling classes in the backward European countries -- the countries which are resisting American-German political and economic control, of which Serbia has been a prime example. These latter countries have embraced the politics of **nationalism**, **xenophobia**, and (in extreme cases) **ethnic purification**, and even **genocide**. Such policies are dictated by economic considerations (there are huge profits for the ruling groups and the mafia which control the local economies) and by the necessity to politically control and dominate a population increasingly subject to unemployment, a sharp fall in their living standards, and a growing hopelessness. For these ruling classes, the politics of xenophobia, and even genocide, are the sole means to maintain their control over the population, to mobilize it behind their governments, and against the Other, the ethnic minorities, and also resist American-German economic and political control. In these countries ethnic purification and genocide **are the logic of capitalism!**

2. Certainly tensions - even potentially military tensions - exist between the United States and Europe, because the relation between the two is one-sided, and presently favors the Americans. However, a break between the two is not likely now, but only in the future. For the time being, the ruling groups in Western Europe march in step with their American chiefs, and the fractions of the ruling class in the Western European countries which favor an openly anti-American policy are not in power, and remain very weak. Their time will come ... but that is for the future, even if the outcome of the war in Kosovo will intensify tensions within NATO.

3. The unfolding of the war in Kosovo does not correspond to a logic of inter-imperialist competition between the Germans and Americans, but rather to a quest for stability, for order, in the Balkan region. The NATO action is dictated by three factors:

- 1) the necessity to prevent a new wave of Balkan refugees from flooding the countries of Western Europe, and destabilizing their economies;
- 2) the necessity to prevent a wider war for the redivision of the Balkans, involving members of NATO itself (Greece, Turkey, Hungary);
- 3) the need to assure stability in the Balkan region with a view to the construction of a pipeline for the gas and oil discovered in the region of the Caspian Sea.

How to assure this order? By unleashing the technological fury of decadent capitalism upon Serbia. By missiles and bombs striking Serbian cities and their civilian population, so as to destroy the military and industrial infrastructure of Serbia, and terrorize the population of that country. That too, is the murderous logic of capitalism. In Kosovo, and in Serbia, we are today seeing the two sides of decadent capitalism: the genocidal logic **and** the logic of the technological destruction of cities and their population. The origin of these two types of mass murder is to be found in the Second World War: the former in the operations of the Nazi **Einatzgruppen** in the forests of Byelorussia, and the cities of Latvia and Lithuania; and the latter in the aerial bombardment of cities like Hamburg, Leipzig, and Dresden, by the Anglo-Americans. These two types of mass murder - though not on the same scale (yet) - are the monstrous reality of the war in Kosovo. And that is only a dress rehearsal for our future within decadent capitalism.

Mac Intosh

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# THE NORMALITY OF WARS AND GENOCIDES

Against those who say that the wars and ethnic cleansings in the Balkans and elsewhere are a continuation of century-old ethnic conflicts, against those who say they are caused by bad, anti-democratic leaders, against those who claim that they are artificially created by the great powers as part of their own interimperialist chess game, we must insist that they result from the 'normal' behavior of the capitalist class in crisis.

On the one hand, the economic crisis reduces the sum of profits, the pie that is divided among capitalists. When this pie shrinks, it's natural that its division creates conflicts. Territory is capital. On the other hand, this crisis creates huge masses of unemployed and an insecure situation for those who still have work, and thus growing unrest, which threatens the ruling class. The natural tendency of this class is to try to channel this energy against an external enemy or a scapegoat, to transform it into hate against the 'Other', to adopt a genocidal rhetoric, in order to reinforce the national cohesion and thus the submission of labor to capital.

That is the reason why we see a multiplication of ethnic conflicts in the regions which are most affected by the crisis. In these areas, capital shows the bloody future which it prepares for humanity, because the crisis can only become deeper and spread from the periphery to the center of the system.

The reaction of the capitalist class of the strongest countries to this rising tide of conflicts is not uniform. When these conflicts take place in regions where the economic and strategic interests of the great powers are minor, they react with indifference. That doesn't mean that they don't meddle behind the scenes to advance their own interests, but they make no great effort to reestablish order there. It makes no sense to spend billions to gain millions. And since the number of countries which are by and large expelled from the global assembly line is growing, this

indifference will be less and less masked. But if these conflicts destabilize regions that are strategically and/or economically important for the global economy, it's in the common interest of the capitals that manage this global economy to contain them. The war in Kosovo is in a way a border war, in which the great powers try to push back the chaos which the crisis that their own system creates. That does not mean that there are no conflicts of interest between them but, for the moment, their common interest in maintaining order in the regions that are important for the global economy counts much more. They do not fight each other by waging war together, as some have claimed. It's quite possible that, after a severe aggravation of the crisis, competitive struggle by any means, including war, will become the dominant thrust for the great capitalist powers. But we shouldn't confound this possibility with the current situation.

It is not by merely reacting to initiatives of local countries that the great powers are trying to reestablish order in the Balkans but by taking the initiative themselves. The decision to wage war, the decision as to its timing and scale, were all taken by NATO and by the US in particular. When one looks at the Rambouillet negotiations, and at the content of the diktat to Belgrade which resulted from it, one can only conclude that its goal was to create a pretext to launch an air attack on the Serbian army, to seriously degrade it, in order to establish a strategic balance in the Balkans which allow none of the local states to dominate, and at the same time to reinforce the military presence of NATO in the region. The CIA and others had spelled out beforehand to the decision makers in Washington what the effects of the attack on the population of Kosovo would be. The war did not show their humanitarian concern but their total contempt for the affected populations.

Sander

# REFUSE CAPITALISM'S WAR-LOGIC!

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The 21st century is rushing towards us in the form of Serbian Interior Ministry troops, automatic rifles at hand, woollen ski masks covering their faces, packing tens of thousands of terrified Kosovar women, old men, and children onto jammed trains, and dumping the bodies of the young men they have murdered into mass graves.

The 21st century is rushing towards us in the form of laser-guided bombs and cruise missiles raining down on Serbian cities like Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Nis, turning apartments and factories into piles of rubble beneath which terrified civilians are buried.

This is not the decomposition of capitalism. It is the murderous logic of capitalism at work - a logic already announced more than half a century ago at Aushwitz and Babi Yar; at Hiroshima and Dresden!

The mass death which has long been visited on the population of the Third World, in Rwanda and Sierra Leone, in Vietnam and Iraq, has now come to the heart of Europe. The brutal ethnic cleansing which had turned Bosnia, Vukovar, and the Krajina into a charnel house has now come to Kosovo. And for the first time since World War Two, the great powers - the US, Britain, France and Germany are at war in Europe.

The destruction of Serbia is justified as a humanitarian mission to save innocent Kosovars, to prevent genocide. But the unleashing of the NATO air war has already provided Slobodan Milosevic with the cover needed to complete the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. And the West, which stood by while genocide was perpetrated in Rwanda (or, in the case of France, abetted it), which permitted mass slaughter at Srebrenica, which encouraged the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs of the Krajina by its Croat allies, now mobilizes its mass media to whip up popular opinion in the service of a "democratic" and "humanitarian" (sic) war against Yugoslavia.

This war has nothing to do with saving innocent civilians, but is motivated solely by the Realpolitik of the NATO governments. The murderous conflicts in the ex-

Yugoslavia are not the continuation of ancient ethnic battles, but the death agonies of a modern capitalist state, which in its post-war form was created to serve as a buffer between East and West during the Cold War, and in which capitalist order could best be maintained in its aftermath, and in the face of a devastating economic crisis, by imposing a new ideological framework, one based on nationalism, xenophobia, and a mythologized past, shaped by fear and hatred of the "Other."

If NATO intervenes today after nearly a decade of bloody wars to divide up Yugoslavia, it is because war in Kosovo now has the potential to destabilize the Balkans, flooding Western Europe - already confronting massive unemployment - with hundreds of thousands of refugees, destroying the fragile buffer state of Macedonia, and raising the prospect of a new round of Balkan wars, this time directly involving NATO countries like Greece, Turkey, and Hungary. The West has no problem with ethnic cleansing as long as it doesn't disturb its vital interests, but it does have a problem with Serbia now. As the possessor of the once formidable Yugoslav army, with a central geographical position in the Balkans, its policies in Kosovo constitute a danger to stability in the whole region. Serbia's wings had to be clipped. A high-tech air war which would significantly diminish Serbia's military capacity was NATO's response.

Whether or not NATO underestimated the determination of Milosevic and the Serb ruling class to resist its Diktat; whether NATO failed to take into consideration the extent to which the Serb ruling class is a prisoner of its own ideology, and incapable of surrendering Kosovo; whether or not NATO unity can survive a long military campaign, one whose logic may lead to demands for the use of ground troops in order to "win," and which may exacerbate the differences between the US and Europe; whether Washington will get its way, and the number of civilian targets in Serbia will be expanded, and a naval blockade to starve the Serbian population imposed: all remain open questions. What is clear, however, is that in this war both sides, Serbia and NATO, obey the murderous logic of capitalism. [ Continued on page 21]

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## Debate

# CAPITALISM AND GENOCIDE

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Mass death, and genocide, the deliberate and systematic extermination of whole groups of human beings, have become an integral part of the social landscape of capitalism in its phase of decadence. Auschwitz, Kolyma, and Hiroshima are not merely the names of discrete sites where human beings have been subjected to forms of industrialized mass death, but synecdoches for the death-world that is a component of the capitalist mode of production in this epoch. In that sense, I want to argue that the Holocaust, for example, was not a Jewish catastrophe, nor an atavistic reversion to the barbarism of a past epoch, but rather an event produced by the unfolding of the logic of capitalism itself. Moreover, Auschwitz, Kolyma, and Hiroshima are not "past," but rather **futural** events, objective-real possibilities on the Front of history, to use concepts first articulated by the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch. The ethnic cleansing which has been unleashed in Bosnia and Kosovo, the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda, the mass death to which Chechnya has been subjected, the prospect for a nuclear war on the Indian sub-continent, are so many examples of the future which awaits the human species as the capitalist mode of production enters a new millenium. Indeed, it is just such a death-world that constitutes the meaning of one pole of the historic alternative which Rosa Luxemburg first posed in the midst of the slaughter inflicted on masses of conscripts during World War I: socialism or barbarism!

Yet, confronted by the horror of Auschwitz, Kolyma, and Hiroshima, Marxist theory has been silent or uncomprehending. While I am convinced that there can be no adequate theory of mass death and genocide which does not link these phenomena to the unfolding of the logic of capital, revolutionary Marxists have so far failed to offer one. Worse, the few efforts of revolutionary Marxists to grapple with the Holocaust, for example, as I will briefly explain, have either degenerated into a crude economism, which is one of the hallmarks of so-called orthodox Marxism, or led to a fatal embrace of Holocaust denial; the former being an expression of theoretical bankruptcy, and the latter a quite literal crossing of the class line into the camp of capital itself. Economism, which is based on a crude base-superstructure model (or travesty) of Marxist theory, in which politics, for example, can

only be conceived as a direct and immediate reflection of the economic base, in which events can only be conceived as a manifestation of the direct economic needs of a social class, and in the case of the capitalist class, the immediate need to extract a profit, shaped Amadeo Bordiga's attempt to 'explain' the Holocaust. Thus, in his *Auschwitz ou le Grand Alibi* Bordiga explained the extermination of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis, as the reaction of one part of the petty bourgeoisie to its historical demise at the hands of capital by 'sacrificing' its other -- Jewish -- part so as to save the rest, an undertaking welcomed by big capital, which could thereby liquidate a part of the petty bourgeoisie with the support of the rest of that same class. Quite apart from an economism which simply ignores the dialectic between the economy on the one hand, and the political and ideological on the other (about which, more later), such an 'explanation' asks us to conceive of genocide not as the complex outcome of the unfolding of the operation of the law of value in the diverse spheres of social life, but as the direct outcome of the **utilitarian** calculation of segments of the petty bourgeoisie and big capital. Auschwitz, the veritable hallmark of the fundamental **irrationality** of late capital, is transformed by Bordiga into a rational calculation of its direct profit interests on the part of the capitalists. However, an undertaking which fatally diverted the scarce resources (material and financial) of Nazi Germany from the battlefields of the imperialist world war, simply cannot, in my view, be comprehended on the basis of a purely economic calculus of profit and loss on the part of 'big capital'.

While Bordiga's reaction to Auschwitz fails to provide even the minimal bases for its adequate theorization, the reaction of the militants of La Vieille Taupe, such as Pierre Guillaume, constitutes a political betrayal of the struggle for communist revolution by its incorporation into the politics of Holocaust denial. For Guillaume, Auschwitz can only be a myth, a fabrication of the allies, that is, of one of the imperialist blocs in the inter-imperialist world war, because it so clearly serves their interests in mobilizing the working class to die in the service of democracy; on the altar of anti-fascism. Hence, La Vieille Taupe's "fervor to contest the evidence of its [the Holocaust's] reality by every means possible, including

the most fraudulent. For the evidence of genocide is just so many deceptions, so many traps laid for anticapitalist radicality, designed to force it into dishonest compromise and eventual loss of resolve."<sup>i</sup> It is quite true that capital has utilized anti-fascism to assure its ideological hegemony over the working class, and that the Holocaust has been routinely wielded for more than a generation by the organs of mass manipulation in the service of the myth of 'democracy' in the West (and by the state of Israel on behalf of its own imperialist aims in the Middle-East). And just as surely the ideology of antifascism and its functionality for capital must be exposed by revolutionaries. Nonetheless, this does not justify the claims of Holocaust denial, which not only cannot be dissociated from anti-Semitism, but which constitutes a denial of the most lethal tendencies inherent in the capitalist mode of production, of the very barbarism of capitalism, and thereby serves as a screen behind which the death-world wrought by capital can be safely hidden from its potential victims. This latter, in its own small way, is the despicable contribution of La Vieille Taupe, and the basis for my conviction that it must be politically located in the camp of capital.

Marxism is in need of a theory of mass death and genocide as immanent tendencies of capital, a way of comprehending the link (still obscure) between the death-world symbolized by the smokestacks of Auschwitz or the mushroom cloud over Hiroshima and the unfolding of the logic of a mode of production based on the capitalist law of value. I want to argue that we can best grasp the link between capitalism and genocide by focusing on two dialectically inter-related strands in the social fabric of late capitalism: first, are a series of phenomena linked to the actual unfolding of the law of value, and more specifically to the completion of the transition from the formal to the **real domination** of capital; second, are a series of phenomena linked to the political and ideological (this latter understood in a non-reductionist sense, as having a **material** existence) moments of the rule of capital, specifically to the forms of capitalist **hegemony**. It is through an analysis of the coalescence of vital elements of these two strands in the development of capital, that I hope to expose the bases for the death-world and genocide as integral features of capitalism in the present epoch.

The real domination of capital is characterized by the penetration of the law of value into every segment of social existence. As Georg Lukács put it in his *History and Class Consciousness*, this means that the commodity ceases to be "one form among many regulating the metabolism of human society," to become its "universal structuring principle."<sup>ii</sup>

From its original locus at the point of production, in the capitalist factory, which is the hallmark of the formal domination of capital, the law of value has systematically spread its tentacles to incorporate not just the production of commodities, but their circulation and consumption. Moreover, the law of value also penetrates and then comes to preside over the spheres of the political and ideological, including science and technology themselves. This latter occurs not just through the transformation of the fruits of technology and science into commodities, not just through the transformation of technological and scientific **research** itself (and the institutions in which it takes place) into commodities, but also, and especially, through what Lukács designates as the infiltration of thought itself by the purely technical, the very **quantification** of rationality, the instrumentalization of reason; and, I would argue, the reduction of all beings (including human beings) to mere objects of manipulation and control. As Lukács could clearly see even in the age of Taylorism, "this rational mechanisation extends right into the worker's 'soul'."<sup>iii</sup> In short, it affects not only his outward behavior, but her very internal, psychological, makeup.

The phenomenon of **reification**, inherent in the commodity-form, and its tendential penetration into the whole of social existence, which Lukács was one of the first to analyze, is a hallmark of the real domination of capital: "Its basis is that a relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity', an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people."<sup>iv</sup> Reification, the seeming transformation of social relations into relations between things, has as one of its outcomes what the German-Jewish thinker H.G. Adler designated as "the administered man" [*Der verwaltete Mensch*]. For Adler, when human beings are administered, they are treated as "things," thereby clearing the way for their removal or elimination by genocide. The outcome of such a process can be seen in the bureaucratic administration of the Final Solution, in which the organization of genocide was the responsibility of desk killers like Adolf Eichmann who could zealously administer a system of mass murder while displaying no particular hatred for his victims, no great ideological passion for his project, and no sense that those who went to the gas chambers were human beings and not things. The features of the desk killer, in the person of Eichmann, have been clearly delineated by Hannah Arendt.<sup>v</sup> He is the high-level functionary in a vast bureaucratic organization who does his killing from behind a desk, from which he rationally plans and organizes mass murder; treating it as simply a technical task, no different than the problem of

<sup>i</sup> Alain Finkielkraut, *The Future of a Negation: Reflections on the Question of Genocide* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), p.28.

<sup>ii</sup> Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1971), p.85.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid., p.88.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid., p.83.

<sup>v</sup> See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1977).

transporting scrap metal. The desk killer is the quintessential bureaucrat functioning according to the imperatives of the death-world. As a human type, the desk killer, that embodiment of the triumph of instrumental reason, has become a vital part of the state apparatus of late capitalism.

Here, the Lukácsian concept of reification, the Adlerian concept of the administered man, and the Arendtian portrait of the desk killer, can be joined to Martin Heidegger's concept of **das Gestell**, enframing, in which everything real, all beings, including humans, are treated as so much **Bestand**, standing-reserve or raw material, to be manipulated at will. This reduction of humans to a raw material is the antechamber to a world in which they can become so many waste products to be discarded or turned into ashes in the gas chambers of Auschwitz or at ground zero at Hiroshima.

While the reification which attains its culminating point in the real domination of capital may contain within itself the possibility of mass murder and its death-world, it does not in and of itself explain the actual unleashing of the genocidal potential which, because of it, is now firmly ensconced within the interstices of the capitalist mode of production. To confront that issue, I want to elucidate two concepts which, while not directly linked by their authors to the unfolding of the capitalist law of value, can be refunctioned to forge such a link, and have already been effectively wielded in the effort to explain genocide: the concept of the **obsolescence of man** [**Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen**], articulated by the German-Jewish philosopher Günther Anders, and the concept of **bio-politics**, articulated by Michel Foucault.

For Anders, the first industrial revolution introduced the machine with its own source of power as a means of production, while the second industrial revolution saw the extension of commodity production to the whole of society, and the subordination of man to the machine. According to Anders, the third industrial revolution, in the epoch of which humanity now lives, has made humans obsolete, preparing the way for their replacement by machines, and the end of history (**Endzeit**). For Anders, the Holocaust marked the first attempt at the systematic extermination of a whole group of people by industrial means, opening the way for the extension of the process of extermination to virtually the whole of the human species; a stage which he designates as "post-civilized cannibalism" [**postzivilisatorischen Kannibalismus**], in which the world is "overmanned," and in which Hiroshima marks the point at which "humanity as a whole is eliminatable" [**tötbar**].<sup>vi</sup> Anders's philosophy of technology is unabashedly pessimistic, leaving virtually no room for

Marxist hope (communist revolution). Nonetheless, his vision of a totally reified world, and technology as the subject of history, culminating in an **Endzeit**, corresponds to one side of the dialectic of socialism or barbarism which presides over the present epoch. Moreover, Anders's concept of an overmanned world can be fruitfully linked to the immanent tendency of the law of value to generate an ever higher organic composition of capital, culminating in the present stage of automation, robotics, computers, and information technology, on the bases of which ever larger masses of living labor are ejected from the process of production, and, indeed, from the cycle of accumulation as a whole, ceasing to be -- even potentially -- a productive force, a source of exchange-value, in order to become an insuperable burden for capital, a dead weight, which, so long as it lives and breathes, threatens its profitability. This "obsolescence of man" can at the level of total capital thereby create the necessity for mass murder; inserting the industrial extermination of whole groups of people into the very logic of capital: genocide as the apotheosis of instrumental reason! Reason transmogrified into the nihilistic engine of destruction which shapes the late capitalist world.

Michel Foucault's concept of bio-power can also be refunctioned to explicitly link it to the basic tendencies of the development of capitalism, in which case it provides a point of intersection between the triumph of the real domination of capital economically, and the political and ideological transformation of capitalist rule, while at the same time making it possible to grasp those features of capital which propel it in the direction of genocide. The extension of the law of value into every sphere of human existence, the culminating point of the real domination of capital, is marked by the subordination of the **biological** realm itself to the logic of capital. This stage corresponds to what Foucault designates as bio-politics, which encapsulates both the "statification of the biological", and the "birth of state racism".<sup>vii</sup> Bio-politics entails the positive power to administer, manage, and regulate the intimate details of the life -- and death -- of whole populations in the form of technologies of domination: "In concrete terms ... this power over life evolved in two basic forms ... they constituted ... two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of these poles ... centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the **disciplines**: an **anatomo-politics of the human body**. The second ... focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their

<sup>vi</sup> Günther Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*, Band II, *Über die Zerstörung des Lebens im Zeitalter der dritten industriellen Revolution* (München: Verlag C.H.Beck, 1986), p.26, and Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen: Über die Seele im Zeitalter der Zweiten industriellen Revolution* (München: Verlag C.H.Beck, 1961), p.243.

<sup>vii</sup> Michel Foucault, "Faire vivre et laisser mourir: la naissance du racisme," *Les Temps Modernes*, 535 (Février 1991), pp.37-38.

supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and **regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population.**"<sup>viii</sup> Such a bio-politics represents the subjugation of biological life in its diverse human forms to the imperatives of the law of value. It allows capital to mobilize all the human resources of the nation in the service of its expansion and aggrandizement, economic and military.

The other side of bio-politics, of this power over life, for Foucault, is what he terms "thanatopolitics," entailing an awesome power to inflict mass death, both on the population of one's enemy, and on one's own population: "the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual's continued existence. .... If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers ... it is because power is situated at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population."<sup>ix</sup> Nuclear, chemical, and biological, weapons make it possible to wield this power to condemn whole populations to death. Bio-politics, for Foucault, also necessarily entails **racism**, by which he means making a cut in the biological continuum of human life, designating the very existence of a determinate group as a danger to the population, to its health and well-being, and even to its very life. Such a group, I would argue, then, becomes a biological (in the case of Nazism) or class enemy (in the case of Stalinism, though the latter also claimed that biological and hereditary characteristics were linked to one's class origins). And the danger represented by such an enemy race can necessitate its elimination through physical removal (ethnic cleansing) or extermination (genocide).

The Foucauldian concept of bio-politics allows us to see how, on the basis of technologies of domination, it is possible to subject biological life itself to a formidable degree of control, and to be able to inflict mass death on populations or races designated as a biological threat. Moreover, by linking this concept to the real domination of capital, we are able to see how the value-form invades even the biological realm in the phase of the real domination of capital. However, while bio-power entails the horrific possibility of genocide, it is Foucault's ruminations on the binary division of a population into a "pure community" and its Other, which allows us to better grasp its necessity.<sup>x</sup> Such a perspective, however, intersects with the transformations at the level of the political and ideological moment of capital, and it is to these, and what I see as vital contributions to their theorization by Antonio Gramsci and Ernst Bloch, that I now want to turn in an effort to better elucidate the factors that propel capital in the direction of mass death and genocide.

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<sup>viii</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.I, *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p.139.

<sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*, p.137.

<sup>x</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage books, 1979), pp.198-200.

What is at issue here is not Gramsci's politics, his political practice, his interventions in the debates on strategy and tactics within the Italian Communist Party, where he followed the counter-revolutionary line of the Stalinist Comintern, but rather his theorization of the political and ideological moment of capital, and in particular his concept of the "integral state," his understanding of the state as incorporating both political and civil society, his concept of hegemony, and his understanding of ideology as inscribed in practices and materialized in institutions, which exploded the crude base-superstructure model of orthodox Marxism and its vision of ideology as simply false consciousness, all of which have enriched Marxist theory, and which revolutionaries ignore at their peril.

In contrast to orthodox Marxism which has equated the state with coercion, Gramsci's insistence that the state incorporates both political and civil society, and that class rule is instantiated both by domination (coercion) and **hegemony** (leadership) allows us to better grasp the complex and crisscrossing strands that coalesce in capitalist class rule, especially in the phase of the real domination of capital and the epoch of state capitalism. For Gramsci, hegemony is the way in which a dominant class installs its rule over society through the intermediary of ideology, establishing its intellectual and cultural leadership over other classes, and thereby reducing its dependence on coercion. Ideology, for Gramsci, is not mere false consciousness, but rather is the form in which humans acquire consciousness, become subjects and act, constituting what he terms a "collective will." Moreover, for him, ideology is no mere superstructure, but has a material existence, is materialized in praxis. The state which rests on a combination of coercion and hegemony is what Gramsci designates as an **integral state**.<sup>xi</sup> It seems to me, that one major weakness of the Gramscian concept of hegemony is that he does not seem to apply it to the control exercised over an antagonistic class. Thus, Gramsci asserts that one dominates, coerces, antagonistic classes, but leads only allied classes.<sup>xii</sup> Gramsci's seeming exclusion of antagonistic classes from the ideological hegemony of the dominant class seems to me to be misplaced, especially in the epoch of state capitalism, when the capitalist class, the functionaries of capital, acquire hegemony, cultural and intellectual leadership and control, not just of allied classes and strata (e.g. the middle classes, petty bourgeoisie, etc.), but also over broad strata of the antagonistic class, the working class itself. Indeed, such hegemony, though never total, and always subject to reversal (revolution), is the veritable key to capitalist class rule in this epoch.

One way in which this ideological hegemony of capital is established over broad strata of the population, including

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<sup>xi</sup> see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971) *passim*.

<sup>xii</sup> *Ibid.*, p.57.

sectors of the working class, is by channeling the dissatisfaction and discontent of the mass of the population with the monstrous impact of capitalism upon their lives (subjection to the machine, reduction to the status of a 'thing', at the point of production, insecurity and poverty as features of daily life, the overall social process of atomization and massification, etc.), away from any struggle to establish a human **Gemeinwesen**, communism. Capitalist hegemony entails the ability to divert that very dissatisfaction into the quest for a "pure community," based on hatred and rage directed not at capital, but at the Other, at **alterity** itself, at those marginal social groups which are designated a danger to the life of the nation, and its population.

One of the most dramatic effects of the inexorable penetration of the law of value into every pore of social life, and geographically across the face of the whole planet, has been the destruction of all primitive, organic, and pre-capitalist communities. Capitalism, as Marx and Engels pointed out in the *Communist Manifesto*, shatters the bonds of immemorial custom and tradition, replacing them with its exchange mechanism and contract. While Marx and Engels stressed the positive features of this development in the *Manifesto*, we cannot ignore its negative side, particularly in light of the fact that the path to a human **Gemeinwesen** has so far been successfully blocked by capital, with disastrous consequences for the human species. The negative side of that development includes the relentless process of atomization, leaving in its wake an ever growing mass of rootless individuals, for whom the only human contact is by way of the cash nexus. Those who have been uprooted geographically, economically, politically, and culturally, are frequently left with a powerful longing for their lost communities (even where those communities were hierarchically organized and based on inequality), for the certainties and "truths" of the past, which are idealized the more frustrating, unsatisfying, and insecure, the world of capital becomes. Such longings are most powerfully felt within what Ernst Bloch has termed **non-synchronous** strata and classes.<sup>xiii</sup> These are strata and classes whose material or mental conditions of life are linked to a past mode of production, who exist economically or culturally in the past, even as they chronologically dwell in the present. In contrast to the two historic classes in the capitalist mode of production, the bourgeoisie and proletariat, which are synchronous, the products of the capitalist present, these non-synchronous strata include the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and -- by virtue of their mental or cultural state -- youth and white-collar workers. In my view, Bloch's understanding of non-synchronicity needs to be extended to segments of the working class, in particular those strata of the blue-collar proletariat which are no longer materially synchronous with the high-tech production process upon which late capitalism rests, and the mass of workers ejected from the production process by the rising organic composition

of capital and its concomitant down-sizing. In addition, the even greater mass of peasants streaming into the shanty towns around the great commercial and industrial metropolitan centers of the world, are also characterized by their non-synchronicity, their inability to be incorporated into the hyper-modern cycle of capital accumulation. Moreover, all of these strata too are subject to a growing nostalgia for the past, a longing for community, including the blue-collar communities and their institutional networks which were one of the features of the social landscape of capitalism earlier in the twentieth century.

However, no matter how powerful this nostalgia for past community becomes, it cannot be satisfied. The organic communities of the past cannot be recreated; their destruction by capital is irreversible. At the same time, the path to a future **Gemeinwesen**, to which the cultural material and longings embodied in the non-synchronous classes and strata can make a signal contribution, according to Bloch, remains obstructed by the power of capital. So long as this is the case, the genuine longing for community of masses of people, and especially the nostalgia for past communities especially felt by the non-synchronous strata and classes, including the newly non-synchronous elements which I have just argued must be added to them, leaves them exposed to the lure of a "pure community" ideologically constructed by capital itself. In place of real organic and communal bonds, in such an ideologically constructed pure community, a racial, ethnic, or religious identification is merely superimposed on the existing condition of atomization in which the mass of the population finds itself. In addition to providing some gratification for the longing for community animating broad strata of the population, such a pure community can also provide an ideological bond which ties the bulk of the population to the capitalist state on the basis of a race, ethnicity, or religion which it shares with the ruling class. This latter is extremely important to capital, because the atomization which it has brought about not only leaves the mass of humanity bereft, but also leaves the ruling class itself vulnerable because it lacks any basis upon which it can mobilize the population, physically or ideologically.

The basis upon which such a pure community is constituted, race, nationality, religion, even a categorization by 'class' in the Stalinist world, necessarily means the exclusion of those categories of the population which do not conform to the criteria for inclusion, the embodiments of alterity, even while they inhabit the same geographical space as the members of the pure community. Those excluded, the 'races' on the other side of the biological continuum, to use Foucauldian terminology, the Other, become alien elements within an otherwise homogeneous world of the pure community. As a threat to its very existence, the role of this Other is to become the scapegoat for the inability of the pure community to provide authentic communal bonds between people, for its abject failure to overcome the alienation that is a hallmark of a reified world. The Jew in Nazi Germany, the Kulak in Stalinist Russia, the Tutsi in Rwanda, Muslims in Bosnia, blacks in the US, the Albanian or the Serb in Kosovo,

<sup>xiii</sup> See Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), especially pp.97-148.

the Arab in France, the Turk in contemporary Germany, the Bahai in Iran, for example, become the embodiment of alterity, and the target against which the hatred of the members of the pure community is directed. The more crisis-ridden a society becomes, the greater the need to find an appropriate scapegoat; the more urgent the need for mass mobilization behind the integral state, the more imperious the need to focus rage against the Other. In an extreme situation of social crisis and political turmoil, the demonization and victimization of the Other can lead to his (mass) murder. In the absence of a working class conscious of its historic task and possibilities, this hatred of alterity which permits capital to mobilize the population in defense of the pure community, can become its own impetus to genocide.

The immanent tendencies of the capitalist mode of production, which propel it towards a catastrophic economic crisis, also drive it towards mass murder and genocide. In that sense, the death-world, and the prospect of an **Endzeit** cannot be separated from the continued existence of humanity's subordination to the law of value. Reification, the overmanned world, bio-politics, state racism, the constitution of a pure community directed against alterity, each of them features of the economic and ideological topography of the real domination of capital, create the possibility and the need for genocide. We should have no doubt that the survival of capitalism into this new millenium will entail more and more frequent recourse to mass murder.

MAC INTOSH

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## Refuse Capitalism's War-Logic !

[Continued from page 15]

Whatever the outcome, the ruling classes on both sides plan on surviving, even as they spread death and destruction in both Kosovo and Serbia. The crisis of capitalism will only deepen in the coming years, and as the present conflict shows, racial, ethnic, and religious antagonisms will be fomented by the ruling class as it struggles to maintain its power. We can expect a hundred Milosevics to bloom. And in the West, humanitarianism and democracy will be exploited as the justification for war, an ideology which the left is especially adept at wielding. Who better than the left, than Clinton, Blair, and Schroeder to orchestrate a campaign of mass murder in the name of humanity? The Democrat, Clinton, and the Socialists, Blair, Schroeder, and Jospin, head the war governments, and are proud of their role. The Greens, like the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joska Fischer, loyally and actively back them up. The whole lot shape the "democratic" hysteria which is spreading death in Yugoslavia. The logic of capitalism is

implacable, and will remain so as long as humankind is subject to its laws of motion.

This murderous logic can only be opposed by a struggle to destroy a capitalist system which is no longer compatible with the survival of the human species, a capitalist system which can offer us only a future of mass death! We must realize that the problem is capitalism itself, not age-old conflicts. Humankind possesses the resources and capability to create the bases for a human community, where the expansion and satisfaction of needs, not profit, productivity, and class domination, determine social life. What is lacking is the consciousness of the global producing class that it can and must rid the world of a system - capitalism - that can only provide us with a future of interminable crisis, poverty, ethnic cleansing and technological destruction.

Internationalist Perspective

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