



Comrade Lambros Fountas fell fighting the police on March, 10, 2010 in Dafni, during a preparatory action by "Revolutionary Struggle"  
For us, his comrades in "Revolutionary Struggle", he is not dead.  
He is in our blood and in the air we breath as fighters.  
He is in our aims and purpose.  
He is in unity with the organization and our struggle.  
Every day, every moment, present.



HE IS IMMORTAL

This work is dedicated to our comrade Lambros Fountas

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## ABOUT OVERCOMING STATE AND CAPITAL FOR A CONFEDERATE NON-STATE CLASSLESS SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

### Prologue

Historically, it has been proven that social revolutions, great radical changes, in addition to the appropriate conditions, also require the elaboration of some basic political positions, proposals and directions in advance, by the revolutionary subjects, that is, by the revolutionary movements.

Indicative examples are the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolution of 1917-1921, the Spanish Revolution of 1936-39, the Zapatistas in Chiapas that began in 1994 and the Rojava-Northern Syria Revolution that broke out after 2012 in the context of the Syrian civil war. Socialism, council communism, libertarian communism (anarchy), communalism, democratic confederalism are political projects and positions that came out of these revolutionary ventures of both the past and the present.

Remaining consistent in terms of our theoretical contribution, of the analysis of the existing and the proposals and positions that we have formulated, since from 2009 "Revolutionary Struggle" speaks about the formation of a revolutionary movement which must have specific positions and proposals but also a strategy of action, we are trying here to clarify which, in our opinion, should be the directions for a revolutionary social transformation in the current conditions of the multidimensional systemic crisis (economic, political, social, environmental) and the liquidity that this entails.

Already in 2009 when "Revolutionary Struggle" had started the second cycle of its action at the height of the financial crisis (armed attacks against MAT (riot police) after the assassination of Grigoropoulos, bombings against Citibank, Eurobank, Stock Exchange, Bank of Greece-IMF), we were talking about the necessity of creating a revolutionary movement that would elaborate political positions and proposals with the prospect of exploiting the crisis and its upheavals for the market economy system and the state, in order to attempt overthrow and revolution.

In this context, in the proclamations of 2009 we spoke of a social organization built on the principles of libertarian communism or communalism, with communes as the cells of the new society.

In 2014, when the organization carried out the bombing of the ECB branch, the Bank of Greece and the IMF office, we had formulated a platform of basic guidelines for a revolutionary movement in our time, the era of the memoranda, which concerned the debt, the exit from EMU and the EU, the socialization of the means of production and services, the abolition of the state and its replacement by a federal social organization of Assemblies and Councils. Our position is -confirmed

by the history of revolutionary endeavors- that a revolutionary movement is impossible without a strategy of action, concrete proposals and a plan for the kind of social organization that we, as revolutionaries, propose to society. Because, no revolution was attempted without the revolutionary societies having a visible direction of the way their newly liberated life would take. Such a direction, such a plan can only inspire and convince that a society free from the shackles and sufferings of the state and capitalism is not only necessary, but also realistic. A revolution can be desired by a society only if it is realistic and necessary, so it may choose to fight to shake off the yoke of modern tyranny and to overthrow the very social relations that have been built within this tyranny between people.

The anarchists' proposal for a social revolution is not a structural proposal for the organization of a new central government, but a proposal for the political, social and economic organization of a revolutionary society in such conditions as to decisively prevent the creation of a new centralized political power. And to prevent this from happening by any political formation, by any kind of adventurers and the nostalgia of the old regime, the social and political organization of the people must have such a degree of composition as to ensure that power will remain in the hands of the social base and that no one will be able to exercise it again in their name and in their absence. After all, this has always been the stake of a revolution: A strong unwavering desire and a deep belief in authentic popular sovereignty.

In an age of defeatism and disorientation, political and ideological confusion, opportunism and adventure -even in the a/a space- it is even more imperative to be as honest and clear as possible about our positions and proposals. Because only in this way we will build a revolutionary movement with real subversive and revolutionary action and, above all, we will we gain the trust of large sections of the oppressed to fight for the revolution. Otherwise, the issue of "revolution" will remain an empty slogan, doomed to be a subject related to an infamous minority, while all of our struggles will remain on the margins of the political and social life of the place.

We believe that the brochure **"FOR OVERCOMING THE STATE AND CAPITAL, FOR A CONFEDERATE NON-STATE CLASSLESS SOCIAL ORGANIZATION"** could contribute to this cause.

It is divided into 4 sections.

The first concerns the fundamental question of the abolition of the state as it was seen by the old workers' revolutionary movement, the second the historical experience of the most important revolutionary endeavors and especially the Spanish Revolution (see Lessons from the Spanish Revolution), the third concerns Communalism and the 4th the question of a confederate non-state and classless social organization in our time.

## 1. THE ISSUE OF THE ABOLITION OF THE STATE

The state as a centralized mechanism of power holds a small part in human history. For hundreds of thousand years, societies at the stage where people were hunters and gatherers, as well as at the beginning of the discovery of agriculture, were organized into gens - kinship groups, factions (or fractions) and tribes. They did not know the meaning of the patriarchal family, the meaning of property and the state. Also, there were no social classes. Everything was common: land, water, food. Women played a dominant role because the family was matriarchal -there was no role for the father- and the children were raised by the mother's gen.

Women determined the origin of the children, participated in the administration of the tribe and the great council, and their opinion played a decisive role. The assembly and the council played a dominant role in the administration of the tribe.

At this stage of development where a "primitive communist society" prevailed, there were many races and peoples that the white settlers and conquerors met in the "New World", America, from the 15th-16th century onwards, but also in Africa. There was, for example, the Federation of the 6 tribes of the Iroquois (Seneca, Kayuba, Onodaga, Oneida, Mohok, Tyskarora), who lived in the territory of today US states, but also on the other side of the Canadian border, in the second half of the 18th century.

The Iroquois Federation and their social structure were studied by the American archaeologist and sociologist H. L. Morgan who wrote the book "Ancient Society". Based on the Iroquois, it later inspired Marx and Engels to write the work "The origin of the family, private property and the state". It describes the transition of human society from primitive communism -that is, a society without patriarchy, without classes, without individual property, without a state, where society was matriarchal, and where communal ownership, equality and a council system of government prevailed- to slavery, class, patriarchal society and the state in the form of royal-imperial and bureaucratic power.

According to this work, all tribes and peoples passed from the stage of the matriarchal society where classes, individual property and the state are absent (e.g. ancient Greeks, Romans). Later on tribal society gave its place to the society of the City and to the power of the Municipality, where the importance lies not on racial origin but on the status of the inhabitant of the city, regardless of racial origin or kinship group. The city as a social-communal organization first appeared in Mesopotamia (e.g. Sumeria) in the 8th-7th millennium BC, where class divisions and the state were initially absent. Such self-governing institutions as the assembly of the inhabitants of the city (Municipality) appeared even later during the period when class divisions and the state were created, such as the Citizen's Assembly in classical Greece (e.g. Athens) or in medieval cities (Communes) of Europe (e.g.

Novgorod, Pskov, the confederation of Hanseatic League cities, the Swiss confederations of cantons), which depending on the circumstances either coexisted or opposed the then state entities and monarchical feudal entities.

The state essentially appeared at the historical stage when the development of agricultural production created a surplus, which was the springboard for the development of the idea of ownership, possession and commercialization of land - something unthinkable for primitive societies- which in turn created the first social and class divisions. The first ruling class historically to own the land was the state bureaucracy in Egypt and Mesopotamia in the 3rd-2nd millennium BC. The first form of ownership was state-owned. The state came to consolidate class domination and class divisions, it consolidated patriarchal male power where man owns the women and children who inherit him.

Woman is demoted from the equal and dominant position she held before, when societies were matriarchal, to the position of the occupied tool that serves for the pleasure and enjoyment of men, but also for the "production" of children owned by the man-father master. It is no coincidence that at the same time the "oldest profession", prostitution, appeared. The state was essentially a male invention.

In the workers' revolutionary movement, the followers of "scientific socialism" expressed the view that "primitive communist society" was inevitably declining and giving way to slavery and the state due to the development of the productive forces. Interpreting the developments exclusively through an economic law-making theory for the development of the productive forces, where the basis of society is the economy and everything else (politics, ideology, etc.) the construct, they formulated the position that a condition of modern communism, which is a society without classes and without a state, would be the pre-development of the productive forces from the bourgeoisie.

Adopting the bourgeois conception of the linear evolution of progress, they believed that, in order for a revolution to take place in a country, capitalism and the productive forces, that is, industry, must first be developed. So the bourgeoisie plays a "progressive" role in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. It was presented as a causality that at some point the development of the productive forces would result in a crisis in the capitalist system of production which would make the conditions for socialism and the socialist mode of production mature.

Thus, the Revolution would break out not because of the subjective will of the people to break their bonds and live free, but exclusively because of the "iron" objective economic laws and conditions, such as e.g. the development of the productive forces. That is why Marx believed that the Revolution would break out in the industrialized countries.

Historical experience, however, refuted his predictions, as neither in England, which was the only industrially developed country at the time, a revolution broke out, nor later in other industrialized countries. On the contrary, what happened was

the prediction of his great opponent in the First International, the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin who expressed the view that the Revolution would break out not in the industrialized countries, but in the underdeveloped ones.

The Paris Commune, the Mexican Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the Spanish Revolution, the anti-colonial, national liberation and anti-imperialist revolutions in the Third World after World War II (China, Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, non-industrialized countries, etc.) where the workers were a minority -although in some of them they played a decisive role- and where the peasant-farmers constituted the vast majority, all happened in not developed, not industrialized countries.

Bakunin believed that industrialization would lead to the militarization of labor, to the alienation and assimilation of the working class.

The workers who took part in the Russian and Spanish Revolutions were first-generation immigrants who had come from the countryside to the city to work in industry, carrying with them the communal notions of their villages, the notions of solidarity and mutual aid, and had not been alienated by the militarized industrial mode of production.

Even today in Rojava-North Syria, where a revolution has erupted since 2012, in a country where a regime in the image and likeness of the former Soviet Union - nationalization of the economy and one-party dictatorship- prevails, the people involved in the revolutionary project believe that it is an advantage for them that the country is not industrially developed and the market economy has not prevailed.

The question of the immediate abolition or short-term maintenance of the state as well as the question of the development of the productive forces as a precondition for the revolution were directly connected with each other, but also with the formulation of the theory of the "transitional stage" which is "necessary" to move from capitalism to communism, a society without classes and without a state.

The issue of the abolition of the state was the main one faced by the workers' revolutionary movement, it was the cause of the conflict within the first International Workers' Union and it was the cause of its dissolution.

In fact, despite their great and substantial differences, the two main tendencies of the old workers movement, the marxists and the anarchists, believed that the state should be abolished. Communism is a society without a state and without classes. But marxists believe in the theory of the "transitional stage", according to which there is a period between capitalism and communism where the working class occupies the state and turns it into a working class (dictatorship of the proletariat), in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie. And then this state dissolves itself (sic). On the contrary, the anarchists have long believed that the state should be abolished immediately from the first stages of the revolutionary process.

The experience of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the occupation of the state by the Bolsheviks proved that no state, however pro working class it may appear, promotes self-abolition. On the contrary, the Bolsheviks established a totalitarian



and oppressive system of power, without political freedoms with the state being the sole capitalist. On the other hand, the catastrophic choice of the anarchists in Spain in 1936 not to hold power (not the state) in their hands, not to destroy the state that was paralyzed by the Frankish coup, at least in the areas they controlled (Catalonia-Barcelona), but to cooperate with it, that is, with the government of the Popular Front, gradually led to the suppression of the revolutionary conquests (collectivization and socialization of industry and land by workers and peasants) in 1937 and finally to Franco's victory in 1939.

In this case, the spearhead of the counter-revolution was the socialists and communists, Stalin's agents and the other "democratic forces". In both cases it turned out that the state can not be used even temporarily as a tool of liberation, it must be destroyed immediately and given no chance for reconstruction or revival.

The historical experience, from the Paris Commune of 1871 to the Spanish Revolution of 1936 - the last proletarian revolution of a historical period (1848-1939) - despite the failures of these revolutions, denied that there were no viable ideas and proposals to build a truly free society without a state, without social classes, without social, ethnic or racial discrimination or gender discrimination.

In fact the revolutions of this period were half revolutions that were not completed or were distorted due to catastrophic choices, mistakes and negative circumstances and confirm the saying of Saint-Just in the French Revolution that "whoever makes half revolutions digs his grave".

Since World War II, the world and society have changed radically. Capitalism, as long as it was not overthrown by the workers movement, is constantly transforming society, proving its ability to evolve and change at the same time the world and the conditions in which we live.

Marxism has been proved wrong for the theory of the development of the productive forces as a precondition for socialism and that capitalism had exhausted its dynamics. There is a constant technological development, such as the revolution of information technology, automation and robotics, and the result is that the traditional working industrial class is shrinking and no longer playing the "historical role" it once had, a role for which there were disagreements within the old revolutionary movement. Also, the decline of the Keynesian model of state intervention in the economy that prevailed after World War II in the late 1970s and the collapse of "existing socialism" in 1989-1991 resulted in the globalization of capitalism which took on explosive proportions in the last decade of the 20th century and in the early 21st century, as it relied on the frantic race of growth supported by the locomotive of banks and the debt economy.

A very important consequence of the continuous capitalist development after the Second World War is the deep and serious ecological crisis that plagues the planet and despite the warnings of irreversible damage (rising temperatures, melting ice, extreme weather events, extreme weather species, desertification-drought) is threatening the survival of mankind and all species. Also, after a period of chain

crises, beginning in the 1970s, capitalism has been experiencing the greatest crisis in its history since 2008, which has put a strain on globalization and reduced international trade and growth.

The economic and ecological crisis are the results of the same factor: the existence of the capitalist system and the hierarchical and class structure of society.

The unlimited development of productive forces, the subjugation of nature to humans, the exploitation and oppression of human by human, the instrumentalization of humans and animals, land and environment, the reckless over-exploitation of natural resources, the pursuit of profit and power are interrelated interdependent things .

In short, the existence of capital and the state as a mechanism that imposes the domination of capital, hierarchy and class division, is the cause of the ills of human society, but also the cause of the ills of the planet, the cause of the disappearance of part of the flora and fauna necessary for natural balance.

Environmental pollution, desertification, natural disasters caused by the greenhouse effect are the modern causes that large areas of the planet are becoming unsustainable and are abandoned en masse by humans. The destruction of the environment and its effects have created a new migratory flow that adds to and magnifies what is caused purely by economic causes, including the destructive economic policies of supranational capital. We would say that in most cases the environmental factors come as a result of direct economic interventions, of the exploitation of people and nature, making the economic-capitalist causes of migration inseparable from the ecological crisis. Added to the above are the large refugee flows created by war. Today, the multidimensional catastrophic effects of the function of capitalism have given birth to the major immigration problem for many countries, for which not only is there no prospect of resolving it within the existing economic and political system, but on the contrary, it will become even greater. While the same prevailing economic and political context will continue to exacerbate the problem, political powers will focus more and more on the tactics of excluding immigrants and refugees, states will be fortified to keep them out of their geographical boundaries and racism imposed by the above will erode societies more and more deeply.

Millions of people have been transformed into the waste products of capitalism and state violence, they are dealt with as such by the very same system that is responsible for this effect and the political elites incite anti-social and racist reflexes amongst a social basis which is sinking under the results of the crisis of capitalism. As a result of this historical development, the poor are turning against the poorer, the outcasts of the globalized system of economic and political power. The result of the evolution of modern "civilization" is a social and cultural quagmire.

Neoliberal globalization, the expansion and strengthening of capitalism has multiplied economic crises with increasing intensity and catastrophic consequences for peoples, has greatly widened social and class inequalities, spread famine and marginalization everywhere, poverty and marginalization, sent billions of people around the globe down Kaiadas in the recent decades, while instigating wars that drowned whole countries in blood. If all the above catastrophic consequences of capitalism and the state cannot become the alarm so as to overthrow the system that gives birth to them, the destruction of our planet must do it.

As anarchists we did not believe, nor do we believe, that there is a final stage of capitalism, from which the "withering" and its "disintegration" begins, since, in the absence of revolutionary movements, it will always find ways to reconstitute himself at the expense of the weakest.

But what unquestionably constitutes the limits of capitalism is the destruction of our planet. A catastrophe that has already caused irreversible damage to our environment and that leads humanity to zero.

The reversal of this catastrophic course is now clear to more and more people that it cannot be achieved by half measures, by the hypocrisy and the tricks of economic and political power. The reversal of this catastrophic course presupposes the fundamental overthrow of capitalism and all the relations of oppression and exploitation of people and nature that this system produces, it presupposes the overthrow of the state and the very political system of representative "democracy".

It presupposes a global social revolution that will ensure social equality and political freedom for all people, that will eliminate all kinds of hierarchies and divisions, that will throw the pursuit of profit and personal wealth out of social relations once and for all; that will manage to reconnect into an inseparable whole human life and social organization with nature.

### **In relation to the class question and the revolutionary subject**

As for the class question and the question of the "revolutionary subject", the insistence on a class war with the exclusive proletariat-industrial worker at the forefront is now anachronistic, a dead-end. The issue presents a complexity and heterogeneity worldwide. The industrial working class has shrunk from the very development of the means of production in the developed capitalist countries. In Europe, North America and Japan, large industrial plants operate automatically. On the contrary in countries of Asia like China or India - industrial workers find themselves in conditions similar to those of the early industrial period: exterminating hours, poor pay, unacceptable working conditions, child exploitation, slave trade. Because of these conditions, countries such as China or India have experienced -especially China- unprecedented growth rates in recent decades and

entered the club of the most powerful industrialized countries, with China becoming the world factory and the 2nd largest industrial country after the USA.

In Greece, the economy relies mainly on consumption, trade and services and less on primary and secondary production. Yes, the class issue is inseparable from a political struggle for regime overthrow, but it must be determined on the basis of modern conditions, so that it is not an analysis and a revolutionary proposal out of place and time.

The concept of the proletariat (a concept derived from the class structure of ancient Rome that concerned those in the lower social class of free citizens (plebeians) who had no income and who contributed to the state only through their children who served in the Roman army), was widely used by the marxists to identify those who lived only on wage labor by selling their labor-manual power and having no property.

The marxists excluded from the status of "revolutionary subject" the great mass of the peasantry which was the largest social class at the time of the first industrial period in the 19th century and which participated in most social revolutions in either Europe (Russian and Spanish Revolution) or in the Mexican Revolution and the anti-colonial and national liberation revolutions of the Third World after World War II (China, Algeria, Vietnam, Cuba). They also excluded the poorest and most impoverished social section of the cities - as, according to them, "these people's impoverishment does not allow them to form a class consciousness". They were contemptuously named by Marx "lumpen proletariat" from the German word lumpen meaning "rags".

Today the notion of the proletariat that served a particular analysis of class conflict and the prospect of a revolutionary change, is of course charged with the meaning and usefulness it had for its inspirers, however by many it is used with a broader character including the employees, who are not exclusively industrial workers, and all those who live off wage labor and are in the lower social strata.

Today the social strata that suffocate under the power and economic violence of capital and the state include people with different socio-class characteristics and qualities: From the marginalized and socially excluded outcasts of modern societies, unemployed, underemployed part-time uninsured workers of all kinds that in our time create an increasingly numerous social stratum, from low-wage workers to small and medium-sized business owners, craftsmen and small and medium-sized farmers who are unable to have the proper income to rise over the social strata of "those who only possess the basics for survival".

For us, the class question and the question of the "revolutionary subjects" to whom we socially address ourselves as a movement, are one. And since we are talking about the class struggle subject, we mean the lower social classes, the salaried workers but also the small and medium ones.

However, we do not believe that the "revolutionary subject" can be found in a specific social class. Clearly, a revolutionary movement is addressed to the social

strata from the middle down of the social and class stratification, but this is different from talking about a special class whose members will be the "revolutionary subjects".

A revolutionary subject is one who has a revolutionary conscience and is aware and able to analyse the present, aware of his role as that of the detonator in explosives. His/her consciousness includes specific political proposals addressed to the popular strata, the working class, the poor, etc.

So the revolutionary subjects for us are the conscious revolutionaries themselves and not some class as a whole. As history itself has shown, revolutionary movements that play an avant-garde role are revolutionary subjects themselves because they are consisted by the most conscious members of the people. And "people" are not a particular class especially today where class stratification is more complex than ever.

The revolutionaries are clearly addressing the people, the poor, the wage workers because these have a material and moral interest in a radical social change. But the question of social address, though related, is not the same as the question of who the revolutionary subject is. For us clearly the revolutionary subject is the conscious revolutionaries and the revolutionary movements.

With poverty rates in Greece rising dramatically from 2010 onwards and no signs of a significant decline, with 30% of the population sinking into poverty and 40% on the brink of extinction, in short a social majority living either in absolute or relative misery or finding it difficult to meet the basic needs in our time, we realize that the social scope of our address is exceptionally broad.

This should include the absence of a neoliberal consensus that was crushed by the 2010 crisis and is unable to return, the deep crisis in the consciences of the representative system of government, the widespread dislike of the rich, of politicians and of the growing opposition against capitalism and the pursuit of profit that emerges due to the destruction of the environment.

Therefore, it would be not only precarious, but also futile to look for a social group with these particular characteristics and limit it down as the "hopeful revolutionary subject", that is, the "vanguard of a social revolution". Such attempts, after all, have failed in the past, as the revolutionary ventures in history have shown us.

A modern revolutionary movement, given the enormous changes at all levels in recent decades, must not reproduce analyses and positions of the past that were developed in different conditions and were challenged even in their time and are completely outdated today; positions about the development of the productive forces as a precondition for a classless communist society, the "hegemonic" role of the industrial working class as a "revolutionary subject", the revolutionary role of trade unionism (anarcho-syndicalism), the theory of the popular state as an intermediate transitional stage.

Today, even if we still believe in the historical role of the class struggle, we must see the proletarians not exclusively by class criteria, but as people who must be emancipated. As emancipated individuals and not as the masses. The destiny of a liberated society must be the free community (Commune) and not a federation of factories even self-governing. Because such a federation takes a part of society, that of labor and production, that is, its economic part, and makes it a really functioning part within the whole of society.

In any case, capitalism has evolved, occupied, commercialized and exploited 100% of social territory and time - 24 hours and not just the part of production and industry. Therefore, the criteria of a modern revolutionary movement should not be purely economic or based on the position of everyone in the productive process but also social. For this reason, other social subjects have emerged in recent decades in the struggle: women, youth, pupils, students, people of different sexual orientation, oppressed ethnicities and peoples (natives, Kurds), etc.

### **The necessity of creating a revolutionary movement - problems and weaknesses of the anarchists**

#### **The elaboration and submission of proposals is a precondition for the revolutionary movement.**

For us, the Revolutionary Struggle, there can be no struggle or revolution movement to overthrow capital and the state, unless there are specific revolutionary positions and proposals. Proposals that can inspire and convince as many people and social groups as possible that it is realistic to have a different social organization beyond capital and the state and to indicate how such a society can be created.

In Greece at a time when the country was hit by the global systemic crisis and the regime reached the brink of bankruptcy and collapse in 2010 -a period marked by the general delegitimization of the economic and political system by large sections of the population who besieged the parliament 2010-2012- a historic opportunity for a social revolution was lost, an opportunity we had been warning about since 2009, a year before the country joined the IMF, ECB and EU memorandum.

The main reason why this historic opportunity was missed, and which we have pointed out, is that there was no common political conscience to be shared with an organized political force or a revolutionary movement about the need to attempt to overthrow the regime at a given time, and to proceed with a revolution based on the existence of structured positions and proposals for a revolutionary organization of society. On the contrary, the organized systemic propaganda that was channeled all

these years by the media, tv channels, newspapers, journalists, regime politicians and parties, constantly repeated the dilemma of "memorandum or catastrophe" and that "memorandum" is a one-way situation.

Against this there was no realistic counter-proposal from anyone. SYRIZA's social democratic proposals evangelized before the 2015 elections were impossible to apply in the current conditions of globalization and international capitalism, a fact that we have been emphasizing since 2014 when the Revolutionary Struggle attacked the Bank of Greece and the IMF office. Finally, when SYRIZA took over the state, and, as another neo-liberal government, ended up voting for 2 "memoranda". Greek Communist Party's nonsense about "popular economy" and "popular power" corresponding to the conditions of "the existing socialism", where the working class and the peasantry are slaves and serfs of the state, also sounded less realistic. On the other hand, the a / a space had no counter-proposal and blamed the resignation and the social defeat after 2012 on society itself in general, that is, on everyone, except themselves.

The imposition of the "memorandum" and the crisis were superficially treated as "a good occasion for good insurrectionary events" and the essence of this top historical place was lost, which could be summarized as follows: The country entered an economic - political - social dead end that could not be overcome by any political force that would want to go to a total breach with the creditors and consequently with the political-economic complex of power as a whole. To have a clear understanding of this situation, you need to have a good picture of the historical facts of that time. And in order to be able to carry out effective action that would provide a way out of the dead end, there was need for a communal political plan of social transition outside the catastrophic framework imposed by the economic and political power with the loan agreements. In short, it required the existence of a plan for a revolutionary social transformation.

But why did the a/a space in Greece not have and does not have proposals and positions that are socially applicable for a different social organization that will replace the capital and the state? Why did it not transform into a revolutionary movement?

Because, probably, given the proportions and the different and opposite tendencies within, it does not believe in some kind of social revolution or has a distorted view of what a revolution is.

For example, several organized groups in the a/a space believe that revolution is a social experience of past times or that it is a "political vanity" in our time. Also, there are no realistic positions and proposals on the thorny issue of power other than slogan references against the state, the government and against any form and kind of power. There are other distortions that are prevalent today and they have existed since time immemorial, from the emergence of the anarchist movement, such as the belief that power and government are the same as the state, anti-historical positions, such as that anarchists should not have representatives, even

that they do not vote in general, or that a libertarian social organization cannot be based on representatives (by appointment) because this is a well-known feature of bourgeois parliamentary institutions. Also, various post-anarchist and post-constructionist theories have prevailed in recent decades, according to which the struggle against the state as a central mechanism of domination is not so important, since the system does not have a "heart" or "center", because "power is diffused in every aspect of society".

In this way, the only important struggles -which most of the time are conducted fractionally and separated from each other, depending on the priorities set by each trend or individual- are those against a form of power that have a reference to e.g. patriarchy and sexism, man's relationship with nature and animals (ecology-antispeciesism), the army, nuclear energy, etc.

All of the above have led today's anarchist and anti-authoritarian spaces to resemble more places of protest than revolutionary movements that can easily be assimilated even with state-government policies, as the government of Syriza succeeded to do after 2015 with some parts of the a / a space.

Anarchism today is more like an individualistic "philosophical" tendency that promotes the autonomy and egocentrism of the individual, his/her "liberation from all forms of coercion", which is in fact a tendency of liberal thought and part of bourgeois ideology and not a trend proposed by a different realistic social organization that will replace capital and the state. It is no coincidence, moreover, that an increase in individualism, observed in the areas of resistance in recent years, is concurrent with the supremacy of neoliberalism that has swept away any existing social and political structures, exercised control over capital and its functions, proclaimed the "end of society" (see M. Thatcher's statement: "there is no society, there are individuals and their families") and made the pursuit of the individual "the supreme" value, promoting the individual's action to satisfy his/her interests, a value that deeply has permeated modern man. However, these characteristics prevailing today in the anarchist - anti-authoritarian spaces - individualism, existentialism, post-costructionalism - did not apply in the past or at least were more "marginal", especially in cases like Spain, where anarchism was an authentic popular proletarian movement of millions of workers and peasants, or in France, which was the cradle of anarcho-syndicalism or revolutionary syndicalism.

Today, concepts such as "the people" or "the working class" are considered by others to be either "obsolete" or "abstract references that have nothing to do (sic) with anarchy but with the left", thus proving the confusion and historical ignorance that some have in our days calling themselves anarchists.

Of course, anarchism was never a homogeneous theory and ideology like Marx's ideas, although Marxism became a "religion" and split into such many tendencies as its descendants (Marxism-Leninism, Trotskyism, Stalinism, Maoism, etc.), that each appeared more "orthodox" than the others.



The views of the anarchists, who produced theories about the state, property, classes, capital, technology, etc, and about what kind of social organization would replace capital and the state were quite different from each other if not opposite in some cases.

E.g. Proudhon was in favor of individual ownership of the means of production. His program was not at all socialistic and reflected more on the pre-capitalist conditions of his time, craft and small-scale agricultural production, while he was opposed to the collectivism advocated by Bakunin or to Kropotkin's libertarian communism. The two main tendencies of anarchism were anarcho-syndicalism tested in Spain in 1936-39 and anarcho-communism tested either occasionally in areas of Ukraine during the Russian Revolution, where the Insurrectional Revolutionary Army of anarchist Makhno was in charge, or in the Spanish countryside during the Spanish Revolution (eg Aragon, Andalusia, Levante, Castile). Individualism was a marginal trend of the anarchist movement with obvious influences from non-anarchist philosophers such as Max Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche.

And yet, the common characteristic of all anarchists, despite their differences, was the denial of the state as a centralized mechanism of power that promotes class and social divisions, hierarchy, exploitation, and oppression. And on this they clashed -especially Bakunin- with the Marxists, since the anarchists' firm position is that the state should be abolished immediately as the first task of a revolution, while the Marxists believe that there should be a transitional stage, during which the working class will occupy the state to transform it from bourgeois to "working class" (dictatorship of the proletariat), in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and when it collapses it will abolish the "worker's state" and thus move to the "highest stage of communism", a society without classes and without a state.

Bakunin, strongly opposed to the theory of the intermediate and transitional stage, had stated since the 1860s that the state could not be used as a tool, even temporarily, to liberate the working class and the people, because by nature it is a power separate from society, it is an oppressive mechanism and that whoever occupies the state mechanism does not voluntarily relinquish their power and privileges. The so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat" will result in a dictatorship over the proletariat and an even more authoritarian regime than before. In fact, he had predicted the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union and "existing socialism".

Never, of course, did those who took power in these regimes abandon it and hand over the management of social affairs to the working class, the people or the peasantry, after the end of a supposed, intermediate and transitional stage, using various pretexts such as the existence of "external" or "internal" enemies that must be crushed and therefore the need for the use of "temporary" oppressive measures against them. That is why Stalin, Mao, the Kim dynasty constantly invented class or national enemies, saboteurs, traitors, "counter-revolutionaries", provocateurs, agents, in order to justify and perpetuate their dictatorship.

So the key to the revolutions of our time and the future -as well as why the former failed- remains the immediate destruction of the state and our position on the issue of power and the management of social affairs and on what we replace the state with to create a society of equality and freedom, without classes, without discrimination, where the management of social affairs or of power will be exercised and controlled by all : workers, people of the cities, neighborhoods, villages, the youth, employees, farmers, pupils, students, regardless of whatever professional or non-professional capacity someone has.

Therefore we have to work out which structures of self-government or popular power will replace the state as a centralizing mechanism and how we will create a decentralized social organization that will give the right to make decisions to all and which will abolish hierarchy, classes and distinctions of any kind.

When we say that we are anarchists - anti-authoritarians, we mean that we are against the state in any form. Historically, anarchism developed at a time when the nationalstate had emerged as the form of power chosen by the rising bourgeoisie to consolidate its dominance.

But if we do not realize that power is in fact in other words the management of social affairs and that it can take various forms, and if we equate the concept of power with the state -historically there were forms of power and management before the advent of the state, such as was the confederation of tribes that did not know the meaning of individual property, classes, state, e.g. Iroquois Federation of North America or the free cities of Mesopotamia in the 8th millennium BC- , if we believe that in a non-state society there will be no elected representatives, immediately revocable, who will be authorized to execute the decisions of the municipalities -nuclei- cells of society (Municipalities, Collectives, Communes), then we, as anarchists, give up on overcoming the state and leave the field free to the supporters of the state to monopolize the management of social affairs.

It is also an illusion for some to believe that anarchists have historically not taken positions of responsibility equivalent to government functions -and we do not mean those who served in the government of the Popular Front in Spain in 1936 -or that anarchists have no representatives. It should also be noted that some anarchists had taken command of brigades or divisions in the Spanish Civil War (Durruti, Ricardo Sant, Cipriano Mera) while Makhno was the commander of the partisan army he had created.

Probably for some anti-authoritarians today even they were not real anarchists!!!

The communes, the collectives, a confederation of communes, collectives, municipalities, or a confederation of syndicates as proposed by anarcho-syndicalism, is a form of power controlled by those who make it up and make decisions: by the inhabitants of the cities, the villagers, farmers, workers, producers, etc.

## 2. THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS



*La Barricade ou l'Attente; André Devambez*

## The Commune of Paris, 1871

The first form of workers' self-government or workers' power

The Paris Commune of 1871 was a form of popular or workers' power, more precisely the power of the Municipality, the self-governing Municipality. The word Commune meant an organized community, a self-governing or self-governed municipality. Several cities and towns from the Middle Ages had developed self-governing institutions, such as city councils, and were free territories against the state entities of monarchs and noble-feudal lords, at a time when slaveholding was prevalent. Some of them emerged after revolutions such as the Münzer Commune in Westphalia after a revolution broke out, the Peasant War in Germany in 1535 against the feudal lords and catholic church, and in Thessaloniki in 1342 - '49 during the Zealous Revolution.

During the French Revolution of 1789-94, it was the Paris Commune of 1793, the popular municipal council, that was the most radical force during the Robespierre-ousted revolution, as well as committees and radical neighborhood clubs.



*The council of the Commune*

The council of the Paris Commune of 1871, meeting at the town hall, was an assembly, a kind of parliament of 95 seats or members elected as representatives - strange as it may seem to some anarchists today- by an electorate of more than 400,000 citizens inhabitants of Paris, of whom 229,000 had voted. Various political tendencies participated in the council: neo-Jacobins, Blanquists, Proudhon supporters, collectivists such as the anarchist Ezen Varlen, and only 2 supporters of Marx.

The council of the Commune was in fact a kind of governmental body which had set up committees according to the responsibilities of the ministries in a bourgeois government (eg Committee on Finance, Labor and Trade, etc.).

The Paris Commune of 1871 was of great political importance because it was the first time in a long time that a practical example of social self-government had emerged, a form of authentic popular power and government, a point of reference for both Marxism and anarchists.

The Paris Commune had direct democratic characteristics. Its council consisted of elected and immediately revoked representatives from all the municipal districts of the city.

It consisted of 35 craftsmen, such as carpenters, builders, printers, metal craftsmen, 11 professionals such as doctors, teachers, lawyers, 30 intellectuals e.g. journalists, 5 industrial workers, railway workers, employees and some businessmen.

The Commune abolished the state bureaucracy as municipal officials were transformed from organs of the state government into organs of the Commune. The police were replaced by the Confederates, the National Guard -the armed forces of the Commune- who were organized by districts and elected their officers, something analogous to the Defense Committees and Control Patrols of anarcho-syndicalist Barcelona in 1936-37, or the Asayîş, the security forces formed during the Rojava Revolution in Northern Syria. The members of the commune council, the civil servants and the Confederates were paid a worker's salary.



Despite its legacy, the Paris Commune had little to do with a purely socialist program as it was in favor of maintaining the small individual ownership of the means of production. Its social base was not the industrial proletariat so praised by Marx, but a pre-industrial working class since France was not a developed industrial



country like England, where "Das Capital" was written based on the conditions prevailing there. The social base of the Commune consisted of artisans, craftsmen and various "petty bourgeois elements", small traders, shopkeepers.

The federal character of the Commune was the exact opposite of the centralism of the national state of the Third French Democracy and also contrasted with the centralism that Marx so praised and distorted to present the Commune as the first attempt of "Proletariat Dictatorship".

But even Engels wrote in a letter to August Bebel that "the Commune was no longer a state in the strict sense of the word." Marx-Engels' views on the Commune were quite ambiguous and contradictory. Before the Commune, they were opposed to such ventures because they promoted the establishment of socialist parties and their participation in state electoral processes. After the appearance and the suppression of the Commune, however, it was praised in an opportunistic way.



In a letter shortly before his death, Marx spoke disparagingly of the Commune, describing it as an unnecessary, costly Community uprising, "a city under unusual circumstances" which could and should have been avoided if the Communards had shown greater flexibility in their dealings with the National Assembly. How opportunistic Marx was in some events is proved by his letter to Engels about the Franco-Prussian War, when in fact the defeat of France was the reason for the Commune Revolution, where he openly was in favor of Prussia because in his opinion it would strengthen the position of the German Social Democracy which was under his influence, in contrast to French Proudhon socialism.



*Marie Louise*



The occupation of the town hall which was the center of power at the municipal level and the Commune as the power of the self-governing municipality was not something unknown to the later anarchists as proved by the example of the Italian anarchists (Malatesta, Costa) who in 1877 marched in the province of Benevento where they invaded the villages of Letino and Gallo and the town halls of the area, burned the bonds and property titles and proclaimed the abolition of the state and the monarchy.

In Spain in the 1933 armed uprisings organized by the CNT-FAI, especially in villages in Andalusia, the villagers followed a stereotypical process: they occupied the town hall of their area by evicting the authorities and the landowners, burned the bonds and the landowners' property titles and proclaimed libertarian communism. Usually such, mostly spontaneous and unorganized, actions resulted in bloody repression and sometimes the massacre of villagers (e.g. Casas Viehas) by Guardia Civil and army forces.



Certainly the Commune made several political mistakes and had several shortcomings. But it should be borne in mind that it lasted only 2 months because it was slaughtered by the bourgeoisie. Its greatest achievement was that it was an example of direct democracy, self-government, decentralization where the lower classes, mainly the workers, took their lives into their own hands. The Commune was closer to the federal conceptions of the anarchists than to Marx's centralism.

It should be noted that six months before the Paris Commune, in September 1870, Bakunin and other rebels had attempted to seize Lyon, France's second



largest city, and turn it into a Commune. After occupying the town hall, they announced, among other things, in a manifesto entitled "Revolutionary Federation of Communes", the abolition of the state. However, the intervention of the army disbanded them and Bakunin just managed to escape to Switzerland, from where he watched the events of the Paris Commune.

## THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE SOVIETS

The Soviets that emerged in the First Russian Revolution of 1905 were also a form of workers' power, which in 1917 replaced the state to some degree and assumed government functions.

After the revolution of February 1917 and the fall of the tsar and until the October Revolution, there was a kind of dual power, where on the one hand was the state with Kerensky's government and on the other the Soviets that had appeared everywhere, in the cities or the province.

The Petrograd Soviet, in contrast to the Kerensky government, had to some extent taken control of the city by taking over the defence and distributing food.

After October Revolution and the occupation of the state power by the Bolsheviks, gradually and especially after the spring of 1918, the Soviets were deprived of all competence and power and were turned into tools of Bolshevik power. Following Brest Litovsk's treacherous agreement with the German-Austrians, which surrendered Ukraine to them, the Bolsheviks began liquidating their left-wing political opponents, the left-wing social revolutionaries and the anarchists. It was only the Bolsheviks that could join the Soviets.

That is why the Communards of Krostadt in 1921, when they revolted against the Bolsheviks demanded free elections in the Soviets so that all the revolutionary parties, such as the social revolutionaries (SRs) and the anarchists could participate.

Some anarchists participated in the council of the Krostandt Commune, like Stepan Petrichenko, who was the chairman of the council, and sailor Perepelkin.

The Bolsheviks, in order to seize power, deceived the workers by tactically adopting the slogan "all power to the Soviets". But they never intended to do that, to let the workers run the factories and industry through the Soviets. In fact, they were in favor of the one-man rule of industry and against workers' self-rule, and what they forcibly imposed and implemented was the complete nationalization of the economy and the means of production, which is something analogous to the Asian model of production as Marx had put it, when he described economy in the slave-owning society, where the state had under its management and possession the land, that is, the means of production.



*the Communards of Krostadt*



*Anarchist movement in Ukraine*



*The Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine*

The Bolsheviks first nationalized the industry and then in 1927 land and agriculture.

The Asian model of production corresponded to the first state -owned class societies (Pharaonic Egypt, Mesopotamia, ancient China) while in the Middle Ages a similar system of production existed in the Arab Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, and even in Tsarist Russia from the time of Ivan IV the Terrible who had nationalized the land of both the boyars (nobles) and the peasants, destroyed the Commune of Novgorod and turned the free peasants into slaveholders of the state. The contemporary industrialized version of this system in 20<sup>th</sup> century were the regimes of "existing socialism".



*The Ukrainian anarchist Maria Nikiforova*

But where the anarchists had the advantage and the unique opportunity to impose their program and ideas and essentially had power in their hands was in several parts of Spain in the summer of 1936, when Franco's coup took place. In fact, without the resistance of the anarchists, Franco would have seized power from the first moment and the civil war would not have lasted 3 years.



Що обняла Вас земля Парижа - не Гуляйполя.  
Where you are hugged by Paris - not Huliaipole.

*Nestor Makhno, Fyodor Stius, Simon Karetnik (Makhnovtsina)*

## LESSONS FROM THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

One of the greatest frauds in modern history is the fact that the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) is presented as a conflict between bourgeois democracy and fascism. The Socialists and Communists have also made a decisive contribution to this deception, since in Spain they were members of the so-called Popular Front, which was nothing more than a counter-revolutionary alliance of the "democratic" bourgeoisie and the working class to oppose fascism.





*Workers' roadblocks, Barcelona 1936*

This alliance was based on the abandonment of the proletarian revolution by Comintern as early as the 1920s when virtually all revolutionary attempts in post-Russian Revolution (in Germany, Hungary, Italy) had failed. On the contrary, the rise of Fascism prevailed and the Soviet Union was isolated.

Gradually, from the beginning of the 1920s, Comintern adopted a tactical logic of supporting anti-imperialist, national liberation movements like that of Kemal, who was armed by the Bolsheviks and was fighting the Greek army. They later backed "anti-imperialist" nationalist Chang Kai-Shek in China, who, with the help of Stalin's military advisers in 1927, massacred the revolted workers in Shanghai and Canton after they had been prompted by Stalin's advisers to surrender to Chang Kai-Shek.

After the rise of the Nazis to power in 1933 against which the most massive and powerful communist party, the German one, had not resisted at all, Comintern switched to the tactics of the Popular Fronts, Stalin's personal choice. The only act of resistance, the Reichstag arson, was denounced as "provocation by the Nazis".

In addition, National Resistance during World War II continued this tactic, the orderly alliance between the bourgeoisie, the working class and the peasants that turned against the fascists and the Nazi occupiers in the occupied countries. In fact, the resistance to Franco in 1936, as well as the week-long armed resistance of the workers of Vienna in 1934 against the Dolphos coup, were the exception to the rule that wanted the fascists to seize power without resistance in most cases.

In Spain, if the Popular Front government was left free to deal with the coup, then Franco would have seized power from the outset. It must be understood that in 1936 the bourgeois-democratic regime was unstable and not at all popular with much of the workers and peasants



*Anarchist militiamen of CNT-FAI*

Both hated the bourgeois parliamentary regime established in 1931 and the monarchy. The democracy, which was based on a liberal-socialist alliance, failed to provide solutions to the greatest social problems of the time, to reclaim the land of the landowners and give it to the homeless and poor peasants, but also to improve the conditions experienced by the working class.

Spanish workers and peasants had repeatedly staged armed uprisings during the years of "democracy": In 1932 the Figoles miners revolted in Catalonia, in 1933 CNT-FAI twice staged uprisings in Catalonia, Aragon and Andalusia, the regions that were under its influence, while in 1934 there was the uprising of the Asturian miners where socialists and anarchists collaborated.

In most cases, the "democracy" responded with massacres such as in 1933 when the Guardia Civil and the army burned living villagers in the village of Casas Viejas in Andalusia causing the fall of Prime Minister Manuel Athania who is said to have personally ordered not to take prisoners, while in 1934 the Asturian uprising were slaughtered by the Spanish Foreign Legion and the Moroccan mercenaries, who carried out mass executions, rapes and destruction after the battles.

Ironically, head of these troops was Francisco Franco, the later coup leader whom the Democratic government had appointed as commander of the Spanish armed forces.



When the coup d'état of 1936 broke out, the Popular Front government, despite repeated appeals from the syndicates, not only refused to give weapons to the workers to confront the mutineers, but also tried to confiscate everything CNT-FAI had and, on top of this, went into negotiations with them offering them ministries which they refused.

In fact, the Popular Front government feared the armed people more than the coup plotters. However the Spanish working class and peasantry, who were influenced to a great degree by the anarchist movement, CNT-FAI, armed themselves and contrary to the wishes of the Popular Front government -which in the end gave them some weapons- responded to the coup with a Social Revolution, the most radical of all the previous ones, expropriating and socializing the industry and the land of the lords and the Catholic Church, by building its own self-governing structures, workers' and farmers' collectives, factory committees and the councils of municipalities and villages in the countryside.

The defeat of the coup leaders in Barcelona, stronghold of the anarcho-syndicalists, after 2 days of fighting between 19-20 July 1936, was crucial for the resistance to the coup in other parts of Spain, such as Madrid, where, when the workers learned that in Barcelona they had defeated the mutineers, they attacked the city guard who had taken part in the coup and defeated it.



*Occupied CNT building*



*CNT (extraordinary conference in Zaragoza-May 1936)*





*anarchist women militia*

But in Barcelona, after the end of the fighting, a decision of enormous political importance was taken, which marked the beginning of the retreat of the revolutionary movement in the face of the state, which was paralyzed by the coup and also by the fact that the workers had effectively seized power.

On July 20, 1936, Lluís Companys, President of Generalitat, the semi-autonomous government of Catalonia, which after the fall of the monarchy in 1931 and the proclamation of democracy was a semi-autonomous state within the Spanish Republic, invited significant members of the CNT-FAI for negotiations on the political regime that would prevail after the defeat of the Francoists. The following words of the President of Catalonia reflected the recognition of the fact that the anarchists and CNT-FAI were in power in Barcelona and the rest of Catalonia: "Today you are the masters of the city and of Catalonia...". "You have won and everything is at your disposal; if you do not need me and do not want me to remain president of Catalonia, tell me now and I will become another ordinary soldier in the fight against fascism. If on the contrary you believe that from this position... I,

with the people of my party, with my name, my prestige, can be useful in the struggle that ended in such a satisfactory way today in the city... then you can count on me and my commitment as a human being and as a politician".



Companys then introduced representatives from other Catalan parties, some of which in a few months became the spearhead of the counter-revolution, such as the Socialist Party (PSOE), the Socialist Union of Catalonia (PSUC), a coalition of socialist-Stalinist communists, parties which had set up the Central Committee of the Antifascist Militia, a virtually state-governmental mechanism that would rule Catalonia after the defeat of the Francoists. Companys called on CNT-FAI, the only force that had power and was favored by the working popular masses at the time, to participate in this mechanism, and in fact from a minority position, since in this committee they would not have majority over the other counter-revolutionary pro-state parties.

CNT-FAI members replied to Companys that they had no authority to decide on the proposal and that they would refer it to CNT-FAI regional committee. The regional committee informed Companys that they accepted the formation of the Anti-Fascist Militia of Catalonia, but the proposal for the Anarchists' participation in this committee had to be approved by the plenary of CNT-FAI Local Regional Syndicates.

On July 23, 1936, the Plenary Session of the Local and Regional Syndicates of CNT-FAI met to decide on the proposal of the Catalan President Companys. Representatives of the Bahco Llobregat industrial area initially argued that Companys's proposal should be categorically rejected, that the Central Committee of the Anti-Fascist Militia was not a revolutionary organization and that CNT should go ahead with the revolution and establish libertarian communism, applying the principles and declared goals of the organization.

Then came some "significant" members of CNT-FAI or "influential comrades", such as Frederica Montseni who said that if they proclaimed libertarian communism, it would mean the establishment of an anarchist dictatorship! It is ironic that Montseni was essentially rejecting the complete abolition of the state in Catalonia and the proclamation of libertarian communism, arguing that this would lead to an "anarchist dictatorship" while she herself, a few months later, in November 1936, would become Minister of Health in the bourgeois government of the Popular Front of Madrid which from May 1937 onwards would suppress in a bloody and dictatorial way the revolutionary conquests of the workers and peasants. Surprisingly, decades later, Montseni argued that if CNT-FAI had taken power, "it would mean that we would have done in Catalonia what Lenin and Trotsky had done in the Soviet Union when the Bolsheviks came to power. We did not do that and we were repeatedly criticized for it. After all, who knows -maybe- we should have done it."



*The Spanish anarcho-syndicalist José Buenaventura Durruti*

But how similar were the workers' and peasants' collectives, the network of committees and councils where there was direct democracy and in which, besides anarchists and many socialist workers, participated members of the UGT (General Workers' Union), to the Bolshevik state dictatorship who ousted the political, left-wing social revolutionaries and anarchists? How similar was this kind of revolutionary government consisting of armed workers and peasants to the state-Bolshevik dictatorship?

In fact the anarchists, as the most conscious part of the Spanish proletariat, had the power, but they ousted it in the name of "destroying any kind of power" and handed it over to the followers of the state who suppressed the revolution long before Franco's victory.







**Spanish revolution - Anarchist militia women of Durruti column with improvised armour**

As a member of the POUM, a pro-Trotskyist party ousted by the Stalinists in 1937, had said, "If CNT did not take power in Catalonia, there could be no genuine revolution. But CNT did not want power. They believed that power over the economy would suffice and presented their resignation from political power as a sign of generosity, when in fact it was a capitulation to certain ideological prejudices.

Power, however, continued to disintegrate in Generalidad Palace (the Catalan state), and flourished in the Central Committee of the Antifascist Militia. "In fact, there were two powers." One, which corresponded to the workers, had the power but not the will to rule; the other, the petty-bourgeois republican power, did not have the power, but had a clear will to regain it."

However, besides Frederica Montseni, in the plenary session of the Local and Regional Syndicates of CNT-FAI on July 23, 1936, Diego Abad de Santillan, another "significant" member of CNT-FAI, had made a statement supporting CNT-FAI's participation in Central Committee of Antifascist Militia.

He said that if CNT-FAI went on to build libertarian communism, the revolution would be defeated and foreign countries would intervene against democracy: "The forces that rule the fates of the world would not concede to help democracy if it involved a revolution".

Unfortunately, the majority of the plenary, with the exception of the representatives of Bahco Llobregat and Juan García Oliver, agreed to the participation of CNT-FAI in the Antifascist Militia of Catalonia and rejected the proposal of the representatives of Bahco Llobregat for the establishment of libertarian communism.

This decision was of enormous political significance, the results of which were not immediately apparent, but essentially marked the beginning of the retreat of

the revolutionary movement which left room for the gradual recovery of the state, in this case the Catalan state and not just that.

If CNT-FAI had consolidated its power in Catalonia and established libertarian communism, the central government of Madrid, which was busy dealing with the Francoist insurgency, could not have opposed it. On the contrary, the complete abolition of the state in Catalonia would have had consequences not only in Madrid, but also in the entire democratic zone where the coup had been defeated.

The establishment of Barcelona in 1936 as a Commune, even if it had a short life, would have been of greater political significance than the Paris of 1871.

Gradually the Central Committee of the Antifascist Militia of Catalonia gave its place to the government of the Catalan state, *Generalidad*, in August 1936 in which CNT-FAI continued to participate with 5 members, 6 by the vote of the POUM representative, against 9 members of the other counter-revolutionary parties. As a euphemism, in order not to provoke the anarchist base, *Generalidad* named themselves "Generalidad Council", when in fact they were the Government of the Catalan state.

In November 1936, while the siege of Madrid by the Francoists was raging, CNT entered the central government of the Popular Front state, holding four minor ministries (Industry, Health, Justice and Commerce).

As for Santillan's position, it proved the opportunism of CNT-FAI leadership from then on towards the Popular Front, but also the illusions regarding the unity of the anti-fascist forces in the struggle against fascism.

CNT-FAI early in 1936, and while the February 1936 elections had been called, had shifted from the line of abstention they maintained in the 1933 elections giving victory to the right. They had also distanced themselves from the 1933 uprisings.

In the 1936 elections, without having a clear position either in favor of abstention nor, of course, in favor of participation, they directed their members to act according to conscience. In fact, secretly, the directive of electoral abstention had been tacitly abandoned.

As it turned out, there was a behind-the-scenes understanding between "prominent" members of CNT-FAI and the Popular Front in those elections: in case the latter became government by the votes of the anarchists, the 30.000 political prisoners of that time in Spain, mostly anarchists, who had been arrested in the uprisings of 1933 and the Asturias in 1934, would be released.

However Santillan's position also promoted the separation of the anti-fascist war against Franco from the Revolution, something that was immediately apparent in the directive expressed by CNT mainstream newspaper *Solidaridad Obrera* (Workers' Solidarity): "War first, then revolution".

The compromise of CNT with the Popular Front expressed the illusory hope that the remaining bourgeois democratic forces in Europe, Britain and France, would help the Spanish democratic government defeat the Franco rebels. But such a thing did not happen. Not even the government of the Popular Front in France helped the

corresponding Spanish with weapons and ammunition while at the same time Hitler's and Mussolini's regimes openly supported the Francoists with weapons but also sending troops, mainly Italian.

The directive "War first, then revolution" was in fact the tombstone on the revolution. The deception about the unity of the anti-Franco forces in Spain was proved almost a year after the coup, in May 1937, when civil war within the civil war broke out, that is, an armed conflict between anarchists and communists - socialists- Catalans in Barcelona.

The battles of Barcelona in May 1937, which began with the attack by communist-controlled police to seize the city's collectivized telephone company, which was controlled mainly by CNT workers, were the culmination of the counter-revolution and the result of its disastrous choice, in the plenary session of the local and regional unions on July 23, 1936, not to proceed to seize political power in Catalonia, but to accept the proposal by Companys to participate in the Generalidad, government of the collapsing Catalan state.

### **The suppression of the Spanish Revolution**

After CNT refused to complete the revolution with the dissolution of the Catalan state and the seizure of power by the workers who trusted it, because it was in fact the only one in power, accepting Companys's proposal, allowed the state to gradually reconstitute itself and when the state realised it had regained its strength, it attacked with military means the workers' conquests from the revolution, that is, the workers' collectives and later also the agricultural collectives.

However, this process of gradual state counterattack lasted almost a year, during which the revolutionary movement constantly retreated in the face of the attacks of the counter-revolutionary forces led by both the Catalan state and the Spanish state, i.e. the government of the Popular Front that had moved to Valencia in October 1936 when the siege of Madrid by the Francoists began.

Initially, the Popular Front in October 1936 "legalized" by decree the collectivizations that the workers themselves in the cities and the peasants in the villages had created in the summer of 1936 in the democratic zone, during the first period of the coup.

But this decree was actually trying to stem the tide of collectivization, since it excluded foreign companies, e.g. of English interests. And this was relevant to the fact that Popular Front hoped for the support of England for the repulsion of the coup leaders, but also to the illusions expressed by Santillan in his July 23, 1936 statement, CNT's overall delusions about the role of the democratic forces in Europe, as he believed that "the forces that dominate the fate of the world (e.g. England) would not concede to help democracy if it involved a revolution."



*Anarchists "Askaso Column"*

As for the industrial workers collectives, since the CNT-FAI relinquished power and participated in the state apparatus only with 4 minor ministries, the counter-revolutionary forces (socialists-communists) had the power to sabotage the power of the workers. And of the workers councils in the collectivized enterprises, as they controlled the Ministry of Economy and the Bank of Spain. The Minister of Finance was Stalinist Juan Negrin, who after the Battle of Barcelona in May 1937 became Prime Minister almost until the end of the war.

In Catalonia, in order for the industrial collectives to get credit for the purchase of raw materials and machinery, they were blackmailed by *Generalidad* (Catalan state) to accept a government auditor as a member of the auditing committees of the collectivized companies that were elected by the workers' assembly.

Gradually, government auditors reduced the power of workers committees to run collectivized enterprises and the workers' self-government was transformed into workers' participation in the management of the enterprises together with the bureaucrats of *Generalidad*, as was done in Madrid where the Socialists were in the majority.



The counter-revolution then continued with the decree of militarization in December 1936, which passed under pressure from the communists. The aim was to disband the workers' militia and merge them into a single military mechanism under a single administration, where of course the communists would have the reins. To justify it, they put forward the "effectiveness" of the International Brigades, which had a classic military organization and hierarchy, controlled by the Comintern and had contributed to the defense of Madrid in October-November 1936.

Of course, their purpose was to disarm the revolution and deprive it of its armed forces, not only the working class militia, but their constant demand was the dissolution of the Barcelona Control Patrols, which consisted of armed anarchist workers and was a force with "police" duties to maintain public order and security in the city.

In both cases, the communists wanted to restore order in the army and the police as key pillars so that the "democratic" state of the Popular Front could be in control and have the revolutionary movement liquidated.

Despite the passage of the decree on militarization, it was not fully implemented, due to the reaction by the anarchist militia. Some preferred to dissolve themselves, as did the members of the Iron Brigade.

In Aragon which was dominated by the anarchists, the CNT-FAI units, although they changed their name- e.g. the Durruti Brigade was renamed the 26th Division, the Askasso Brigade the 28th - they did not merge into the People's Army and did not form mixed divisions as the Communists wanted. The commanders remained anarchists, they maintained their political autonomy, their internal structure did not change nor did the spirit of comrade solidarity between them and their commanders change.

The main result of militarization was not, of course, the military effectiveness propagated by the communists on the war fronts, but their dominance and the dominance of Stalin's policies in the "democratic" camp. Weapons and ammunition, as well as minimal Soviet aid, went to the communist-controlled military units, while the anarchist units on the Aragon front remained poorly equipped and pinned down in a trench front that remained unchanged for almost 2 years, from autumn 1936 until that of 1938, when Franco's army had reached the borders of Catalonia. In fact, the anarchist units in Aragon, due to lack of supplies, were never able to organize an attack to occupy Zaragoza, which had been occupied by the Francoists since the first days of the coup, a great loss for the Spanish anarchist movement. Zaragoza was a major stronghold of Spanish anarchism, it was more "anarchist" than "syndicalist" Barcelona and it was there that in May 1936 the CNT congress that introduced libertarian communism in its program was held, something that had not gone unnoticed by the nationalists.

Militarization also served in some cases as a means of purging the communists from the anarchists when communist Stalinist commanders sent anarchist units to "suicide" operations against the Francoists. In such a case, in August '37, a

communist Stalinist commander named Arinio sent a unit of cenetistas -this group also included the notorious later anti-Francoist anarchist guerrilla Francisco Sabate Liopart (El Kiko)- in such a "suicide" operation, where 80% of anarchists were killed in battle. Sabate executed Arinio in revenge and fled to Barcelona to avoid assassination, where he briefed the CNT Catalonia committee on the events.



*Anarchists in Saragoza*

The irony of the story is that in terms of militarization, the "disorganized" workers crushed the well-organized and well-equipped military coup in many Spanish cities in the summer of 1936 in Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia and elsewhere whereas the army with the classic military hierarchy imposed by the communists lost all major battles against the Francoists, most notably the battle of Evros in October 1938.

On the contrary, the 14th Division, which was an anarchist unit commanded by Cipriano Mera, defeated the Italian expeditionary force at the Battle of Bruega near Madrid in 1937, and this was the greatest success of the "democrats" in the civil war. After the defeat at the Battle of Evros, Stalin ordered the withdrawal of the International Brigades from Spain, as it was clear that the war was over. In fact, Stalin gave some help to the "democratic" government of the Popular Front, using the Spanish Civil War as a pawn on the geostrategic chessboard to "blackmail" Britain and France into forming an anti-Hitler anti-German front with the Soviet Union, which Britain and France rejected by adopting the line of "non-intervention".

The minimal help Stalin gave, not enough to give victory to the Democratic camp, was given in exchange for Spain's gold reserves, which were the largest in the

world and, of course, with the provision that the revolutionary movement was suppressed.

After the war had been decided, already since 1938, Stalin began diplomatic approaches with Hitler's Germany which ended after 1 year, in August 1939, in the German-Soviet Ribbentrop-Molotov pact concerning the divide of Poland. It was essentially the last step before the outbreak of World War II.

The Battle of Barcelona in May 1937 was the swansong of the revolution, it was the last chance for the revolutionary movement and the anarchists to seize power and crush the counter-revolutionary alliance of the Catalans-socialists-communists. While they had supremacy in arms and held 90% of Barcelona during the battle, the opportunism of CNT- FAI leadership and its insistence on supporting the Popular Front in the government in which they participated led to political defeat, retreat and the loss of the revolution. While the anarchist brigades from the Aragonese front, who were willing to help the rebellious anarchist workers of Barcelona, could also intervene, no such decision was finally made. Instead, there were constant appeals from CNT-FAI leadership and CNT ministers in the Popular Front government for peace and the end of hostilities.

Contrary to the submissiveness of CNT-FAI leadership, the government of the Popular Front from Valencia sent an army and police force to restore order while abolishing the autonomy of Catalonia. But there were also anarchist groups that took part in the Battle of Barcelona, such as the Friends of Durruti, who, in spite of what CNT-FAI leadership said, spoke about the seizure of power by a revolutionary committee, the liquidation and execution of counter-revolutionary elements.

They were joined by the small anti-Stalinist POUM Marxist party. But these groups did not have much influence and the decision was never made during the battles for power while there was an opportunity.

This fact is of great importance because it reveals the magnitude of the distortions and falsifications that existed in the anarchist movement at the time and also continue to exist today in the idea of many who call themselves anarchists that the concepts of power and the state are identical.

In 1936 and 1937 there were tendencies and groups within the anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movement, such as the anarcho-syndicalist workers of Bahco Llobregat, the Friends of Durruti, the Libertarian Youth who demanded the seizure of power by the CNT, which was also the ruling power and represented the large mass of workers and peasants.

It turns out that a revolution naturally and inevitably raises the question of the seizure of power, not of the state necessarily, since it is a libertarian revolution. In a revolution either the poor, the workers, the women, the common people will seize power through their own structures of self-government or the state as a monopoly centralized mechanism of power will crush them.

This was the case in all revolutionary ventures. There can be no long-term dual power and either the revolutionary power of the common people will be imposed or

the state power representing a social and economic elite will, against the social majority.

In the Paris Commune, either the Commune would win and its example would be extended to every city throughout France which would become a Federation of Communes or the state of Thiers would.

In the Russian Revolution either the free and independent Soviets of workers and peasants would win or the Bolshevik state would. The term Soviet Union is a term that does not stand for power vested into the Soviets of workers and peasants, since power was vested in the state bureaucracy composed of members of the Bolshevik Party. The term Soviet state is paradoxical and contradictory.

In the Spanish Revolution either the workers' and peasants' collectives, the workers' and peasants' councils or the state of the Popular Front would win.

In Spain, groups such as the Friends of Durruti believed that CNT-FAI needed to seize not only economic but also political power. The Generalidad Council, that is, the Catalan state, should be overthrown and replaced by the network of workers' committees that had initially led the revolution. In 1937, on April 14, shortly before the Battle of Barcelona, they declared: "CNT and FAI, being the organizations expressing the concerns of the people, must find a revolutionary way out of this dead end... We have the means which will replace the ruins of the State. Syndicates and municipalities must take control of economic and social life."



*Batallon de la Muerte ñ Centuria Malatesta*

Here, the Friends of Durruti also express a communalist position, since in addition to the syndicates that, according to the anarcho-syndicalist view, will take over the management of the economy, there are also the Municipalities that will take over the management of social affairs in place of the state.

After the Battle of Barcelona, in which around 500 people were killed, an orgy of terrorism and pogroms broke out by the Communists and the local branch of the Soviet NKVD in Spain, the SIM (secret services). POUM was accused of being an agent of the fascists and was outlawed, government forces arrested hundreds of POUM members and anarcho-syndicalists, many of whom were tortured and killed. Censorship was imposed, the weapons owned by the unions, the workers' defense committees, were confiscated, while the revolutionary committees and the Control Patrols were outlawed.

POUM secretary Andres Nin was arrested, tortured and killed and his body was never found. The Stalinists falsely claimed that he was in Berlin. His assassination was a follow up to the Moscow trials, where Stalin with false accusations liquidated the old Bolshevik guard (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin). Following the fabrications of the Communist-Stalinists, the Caballero government fell because it had refused to outlaw POUM, and Stalinist Juan Negrin, willing to obey Moscow's orders, became prime minister. The new government ousted the CNT members who had participated in the Caballero government.

All this terrorism was announced months ago when Pravda in the Soviet Union in December 1936 stated that: "The purge of Trotskyist and anarcho-syndical elements has already begun in Catalonia. This project will be completed in Spain with the same vigor as in the USSR".

The dismantlement of the revolutionary conquests continued in June 1937 with the attack by a communist division under Enrique Lister against the peasant collectives of Aragon, resulting in the destruction of many of them creating supply problems for Barcelona.

They also dissolved the Council of Aragon, a kind of workers' and peasants' government which was initially controlled by CNT-FAI and later had been joined by other parties and organizations such as the Socialist-controlled General Workers' Union (UGT). The Council of Aragon had come from the regional federation of Aragon collectives and was chaired by the anarcho-syndicalist Joaquin Ascaso, brother of Francisco Ascaso, a member of the Los Solidarios, a comrade of Durruti who was killed in the battle of Barcelona in July 1936, at the beginning of Franco's coup. By 1938 the revolutionary movement had been defeated, the defense committees and control patrols had been disarmed, the workers' collectives had been suppressed, many businesses had been returned to their old capitalist owners as well as land. Capitalism and the bourgeois state had been restored thanks to the communists. Only in the countryside, far from the urban centers of power, did the rural collectives survive, but the revolution had already been lost long before Franco defeated it.

The anarchists took a much more bloody revenge than the communists in March 1939 when some army officers under Colonel Cassado, with the support of the anarchists, overthrew the Negrin government and prevailed in Madrid, which had not yet fallen to the Francoists. In the battles that followed, which were more bloody than those in Barcelona, 4,000 people were killed. They formed a government that tried unsuccessfully to negotiate with Franco at the end of the war.

### **Workers and peasants collectives**

Collectivization in cities and industry was prevalent mainly in Catalonia, which was the most industrialized region of Spain, where anarcho-syndicalists had the greatest power.

Outside Catalonia, industrial collectivization has spread to Alcoy in the province of Alicante and parts of the Basque Country.



CNT-FAI was not able to carry out collectivization in the cities to the extent they wanted, owing to the reaction of the UGT (*General Workers' Union*), the union controlled by the Socialist Party, the reaction of the Democrats, Liberals, Socialists and Communists, former owners, the government of Catalonia and the central government of Valencia, who reacted and sabotaged collectivization.

In areas under the strong influence of the Socialists and Communists (Madrid, Valencia, Basque Country), capitalist property was not expropriated, but a co-management regime was imposed on workers' factories with employers as bosses.

However, in Catalonia and Barcelona collectivization was almost complete. Everything was collectivized and socialized: the textile industry, the metal industry and the war industry, the gas, water, electricity companies, the telephone company,

the railways, the public transport (trams), the health services-hospitals, the ports, even the optics industry, the bakeries, the barbershops, the pharmacies etc.

In the region of Alcoy (Alicante) the textile industry, the paper industry, construction, the metal industry, the transport, etc. were collectivized.

In areas of the Basque Country and Asturias, the fishing industry was collectivized, that is, the fishing fleet and the freezing and canning factories. Here the collectivization took place with the consent of the socialist workers of UGT. It should be noted that in some cases the base of the Socialists who were members of UGT, despite the contrary view of their leaders, participated in collectivization, either in industry or in rural collectives, together with members of CNT.

In contrast to the collectivization of industry, which was limited mainly to Catalonia, rural collectivization was much more widespread and dominated the "democratic" zone where Franco's coup was suppressed, not only in Catalonia, but also in Aragon, Levante, Andalusia and even in areas where the anarchists had less influence than the socialists, such as in conservative Castile, Madrid area.

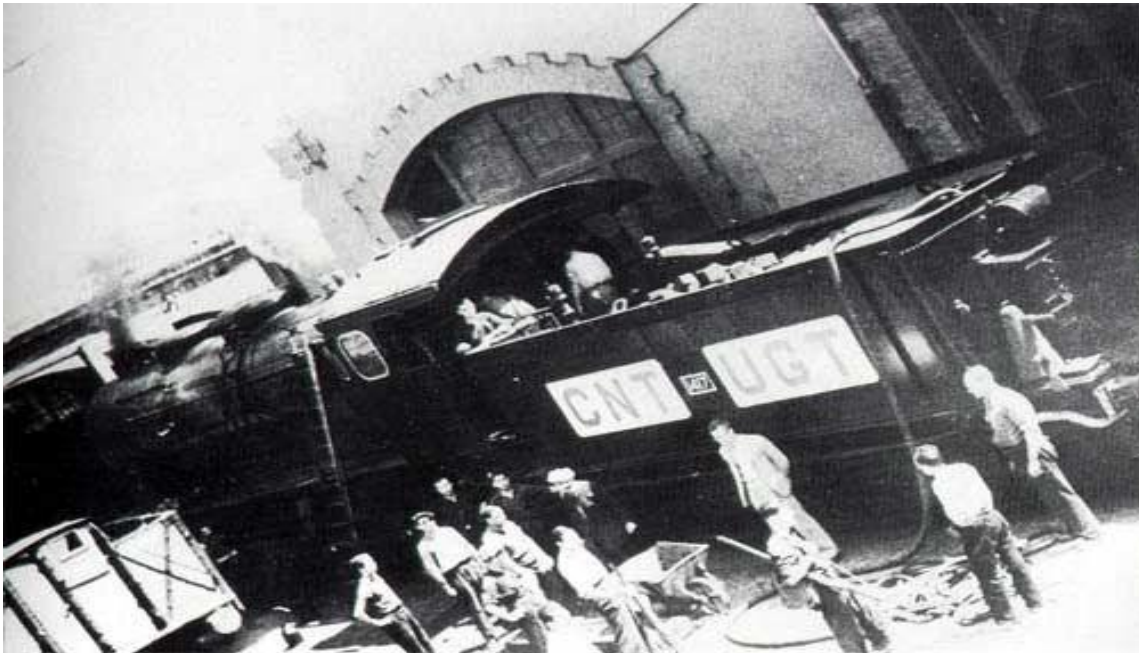
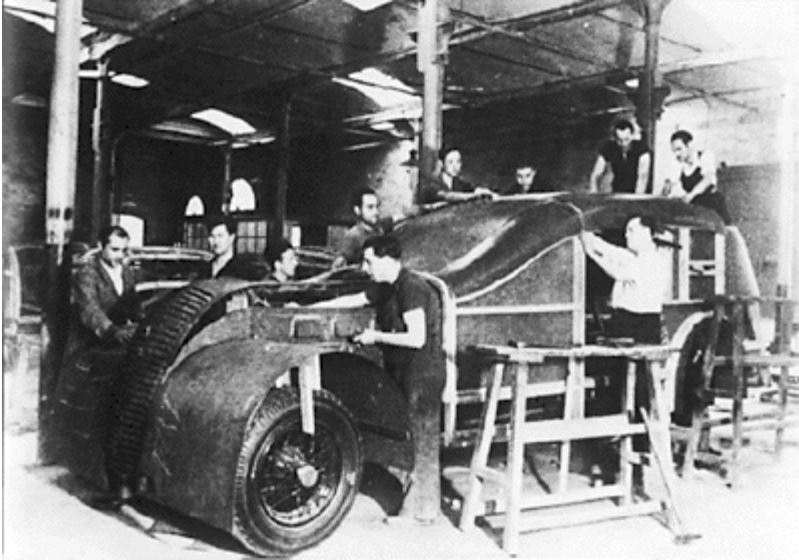
Indicatively, in Levante there were 900 agricultural collectives, 300 in Castile, 450 in eastern Aragon, in the part that did not fall from the beginning into the hands of the Francoists. The extent of rural collectivization in Spain could not be measured precisely because due to changes on the war front, many collectives were occupied by the Francoists before they were established, as was the case in Andalusia. There, the anarchists had great influence and the landless peasants and villagers who had little land and before the revolution worked in the big estates, collectivized the land, but Andalusia was one of the first areas to fall into the hands of the Francoists.

Agricultural collectivization in Spain had nothing to do with the nationalized "collectivisation" imposed by Stalin by fire and sword in 1927 in the Soviet Union.

In the Spanish Revolution collectivization was implemented from the social base, from below, by the peasants and villagers, who voluntarily expropriated the estates wherever these existed (eg in Andalusia) or united their small holdings and cultivated them collectively. Agricultural collectives in Spain were a form of agricultural self-government controlled by the assemblies of the inhabitants of the villages where the collectives were located.

On the contrary, in the Soviet Union, the "collectivization" of 1927 was in fact the complete nationalization of the land, where the land belonged to the state and the state bureaucracy and where the peasants were slaveholders of the state. Unlike Spain, the nationalized "collectivisation" in the Soviet Union met with strong reactions from the peasants who, as they did in the years of the revolution (1918 - '22) where the Bolsheviks violently confiscated agricultural crops, these same villagers destroyed the crops and killed the animals while the Soviet state responded with massacres, executions, deportations, in the name of fighting the "kulaks".





In the Spanish Revolution, the peasant collectives practiced a communist form of labor and distribution by paying the workers according to their needs rather than depending on their performance at work.

Agricultural collectives did not even have trade logic and did not operate on the basis of profit. Many had abolished money and where it was still maintained each family received a wage depending on the number of its members. Those - and there were many- who had a surplus of their production and harvest, e.g. in olive oil, wine, wheat, distributed the surplus to their members or helped other "poorer"



collectives in case of need. Solidarity and mutual aid were their main feature.



*Industrial collectivisation during the Spanish revolution*



Collective members had free access to health services, e.g. the doctor, while they founded schools where of course education was free and where the libertarian education system of Francisco Ferrer was applied.

In a country where the basically poor, that is, the vast majority of the population, had no access to a doctor, illiteracy rate was high and education was under control of the Catholic Church, the revolution generally provided satisfactory solutions.

Agricultural collectives were organized according to the anarchist principles of federalism, that is, like in a federation.



*agricultural collectivization in Catalonia*

The best known was the Federation of Collectives of Aragon, which was founded in January 1937 and numbered 450-500 collectives with 433,000 members. Although there were cases where several villagers joined the collectives out of fear, collectivization in the countryside was a great success and even smallholder farmers found that joining the collectivization had several practical advantages. It is also true that those who wanted to continue individually and not join in, could do so provided they did not use paid work.

The success of rural collectivization endured even after the end of the war and the victory of Franco in 1939, when in Levante a state agricultural body reported that it was difficult to decollectivize the peasants, who preferred collectivization, community rather than individual farming.

The revolutionary anarchist venture in Spain was the most radical revolutionary project in the history of the workers movement, affecting the lives of millions of people in the territory where Franco's coup was initially suppressed by the worker's movement, which was largely influenced by the anarchists and their organizations, CNT-FAI. Its achievements did not concern only the collectivization of the economy and production, industrial and agricultural, but all aspects of social life, e.g. education, health, services, safety, etc. This revolution also signalled a great struggle for women's liberation and emancipation and its penetration was such that it largely determined the interpersonal relationships of people and family as an institution.





The revolution, despite taking place in the midst of a brutal civil war, in the territories where it happened, in Barcelona and Catalonia or in other parts of the "democratic" zone, ensured a satisfactory standard of living, since everyone had access to basic goods and services (e.g. health).

When the fights were over, in July '36 in Barcelona, social life returned to normal, all services functioning under the system of collectivization, the distribution of goods, transport, electricity, water, gas and telephone companies. A company operated smoothly under the control of the employees.

Regardless of the conditions during the civil war, as long as Barcelona was under the control of the workers and the anarchists, there was seldom a shortage of goods, despite the violent attacks of the Stalinist communists who were fanatic enemies of collectivization and of the workers' self-government and who they wanted the state to take back control and hand over the businesses to their old owners.

In the field of security, since the state police Guardia Civil had been disorganized due to the fact that most of it had sided with the Francoists and few forces had remained loyal to the "democracy", "police" duties were handled by the armed workers. In Barcelona, they were carried out by the members of CNT-FAI who had set up the Patrols of Control (Patrullas de Control), something similar to the Asayis, the Security Forces in Rojava-Northern Syria today.

Every revolution in the effort of social reorganization takes over not only the control of the economy but also of defense, security and justice. Not only it has an army, but armed forces that are responsible for maintaining order as well.

The anarchists in Barcelona, Catalonia and Aragon fought against the looting, the robberies that were the result of the first days of the war and of the disintegration of state structures and the police. In the countryside, brigades and militia also had the responsibility to maintain order.

In similar cases in the Paris Commune, the National Guard had taken over military and "police" duties, in the Russian Revolution it was the Soviets, while in Greece E.L.A.S (Greek Popular Liberation Army), fought against robberies and thefts in the countryside and had had similar duties although ELAS was not a revolutionary anti-capitalist movement, but an orderly patriotic front (during enemy occupation Second World War) aimed at a bourgeois-democratic regime.

Revolutions and revolutionary endeavors attempting a radical social reorganization do not intend chaos, lawlessness, the absence of government or a situation where "everyone does what they want", as it claimed by the statespeople or by those who call themselves "militants" and consider that the existence of laws and structures means self-oppression of the individual. Because what is at stake here is an attempt to build a fairer social organization.

## THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION OF 1956

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 is very important because on the one hand it revealed the nature of the regimes of "existing socialism" and on the other hand, for the first time after the Spanish Revolution of 1936-'39 and the Second World War, the Workers' Councils reappeared.



*Hungary - Invasion of the Soviet army in Hungary with 1000 tanks*



The Hungarian industrial workers continued the revolutionary tradition that began with the Paris Commune of 1871, that of the Russian Soviets of 1905 and 1917, the German councils of workers and soldiers of 1918-19 and the Hungarian of 1919, the Commune of Kronstadt in 1921 and the workers' and peasants' collectives in Spain in 1936.



*23/10/1956 The Hungarian Revolution begins*



In fact, the first social uprisings and revolutions in Europe after World War II and before May 1968 did not concern Western capitalist Europe, where capitalism enjoyed the most stable period of growth and reconstruction under the Keynesian economic model (nationalization of key financial sectors, state intervention in the



economy, public investments, full-time employment, social welfare state), but Eastern Europe of "existing socialism".

The cycle of uprisings after Stalin's death began with the uprising of prisoners in the huge Gulag concentration camp of Vorcuta in northern Russia near the Arctic Circle in 1953, continued with a strike by East Berlin builders at the same time which was drowned in blood by the tanks of the "democratic" regime of East Germany, with the uprising of the Poznan workers in Poland in June 1956, and culminated in the Hungarian Revolution of October-November 1956 which was also drowned in blood by the Soviet intervention.

Then came the Spring of Prague in 1968, which was also suppressed by the Soviets, and the Polish workers' movement in large industrial centers, such as the Gdansk shipyards in the 1970s and 1980s, which was ousted by martial law from the "communist" regime General Wojciech Jaruzelski.

In Hungary, after the failure of the experiment of the short-lived Soviet Republic of 1919, the first fascist regime in interwar Europe was imposed under Admiral Horthy, who relentlessly persecuted the workers movement.

In World War II, Hungary joined the Axis Alliance and in 1944 was "liberated" by the Red Army. Although the Hungarian people accepted the Red Army as a liberator, they soon became acquainted with the paradise of "existing socialism".

After a short period of time in the Soviet-occupied countries of Eastern Europe when a coalition of socialist, peasant and communist parties ruled, in 1948 the dictatorship of the communist parties was imposed and a regime similar to that of the Soviet Union prevailed. The Hungarian Revolution was a genuine citizens' and workers' revolution that turned against a pro-Russian slave regime that could not have survived without the support of the Red Army.



The occasion for the Revolution came after the uprising of Poznan workers in Poland in June 1956 and the official funeral on October 6 of the same year of

Laszlo Raik, a Communist Party leader who had been executed in 1949 as a "Titoist" by the pro-Stalinist regime and was restored in 1956. The funeral of restored Raik was followed by a demonstration by tens of thousands of people demanding democratic reforms by the government.

At the time after Stalin's death and the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union in 1956, where Khrushchev denounced worshipping Stalin and Stalin's crimes, a political earthquake struck the Eastern European regimes, triggering social upheavals that led to uprisings and revolutions that questioned and revealed the nature of these regimes.



In Hungary, students and a circle of left-wing intellectuals, the Petefi Circle, decided to hold a demonstration on October 23, 1956 in solidarity with the Polish people as at that time and after the June events in Poznan there was a change of government in Warsaw with a more "moderate" communist government under Gomulka infuriating the Soviet government which threatened to intervene because it dared to replace the defense minister who was Russian, "hero" of World War II Rokosovsky. At the same time, the October 23 rally was intended to call for democratic reforms by the regime.

Indeed, hundreds of thousands of people, students, youth, factory workers gathered in the central square of Budapest and demanded democratic reforms by the regime with a list of 16 demands. The news that at the same time the hardline secretary of the communist party Erno Gere made statements from the Radio building declaring that "the working class will defend the regime and crush the counter-revolution", made many of the protesters rush to the building in order to publically announce the demands of the rally.

But when they arrived, they were confronted by members of the regime's notorious state security force who opened fire on the protesters, killing some of

them. Riots ensued, roadblocks were set up, a general strike was declared and workers in the war industry handed out weapons to the insurgents. It was also observed that units of the police - not the state security - as well as the Hungarian army joined with the insurgents while others maintained a moderate stance. During the clashes, members of the hated state security were executed in the streets by armed rebels who tore down a huge statue of Stalin and dismantled symbols of the regime while the workers occupied the factories and formed Workers' Councils.

With no significant troops able to defend it, the regime turned to the Soviets, who carried out the first military operation with troops already stationed in Hungary from October 24 to 28. Fierce street battles ensued in Budapest where the rebels defended themselves using as weapons Molotov cocktails to weapons distributed by arms factories. But the Soviets were defeated in the first phase and failed to suppress the Revolution. In the meantime, however, the "hardcore" government fell and was replaced by a more "moderate" government led by Imre Nagy, who had fallen into disfavor, and had previously been imprisoned by the Communist Party, hoping that he could control the situation after he had at least agreed on some of the demands of the revolutionaries.



*The 15-year-old girl who became a symbol of the Hungarian uprising of 1956*

However Nagy could not calm the situation and the Soviets decided to intervene for the second time, after firing him while he was negotiating with them, and appointed hardliner Janos Kadar head of the new government.

The second and most organized Soviet military operation began on November 4 under the leadership of Marshal Zukoff, the conqueror of Berlin in 1945. It took

the Soviets a week of fighting to crush the heroic resistance of the rebellious Hungarian people in November 10, 1956. The last stronghold of resistance to fall was the industrial district of Chepel, which was a symbol of Hungarian working class - "Red Tsepel" - since the 1919 Revolution.

The first workers' council appeared the day after the clashes, on October 24, at a machine tool factory with 10,000 workers. It had 71 members and the first measures it took were: a) dismissal of the management, b) burning the workers' files that contained everything on their behavior at work, c) abolition of the hated by the workers work system of getting paid by the piece rate which meant the increasing exploitation of workers to increase productivity.

Workers' councils spread to most of the industrial zones of Budapest and other industrial cities. A statement from representatives of dozens of workers' councils on October 31 stated that "the supreme body in the factory is the workers' council, which is democratically elected by the workers. The director is elected by the workers' council. This election is done after an open general gathering called by the executive committee of the council".

Much of the left and Stalinist apologists insulted the Hungarian revolutionaries, claiming that they were in fact counter-revolutionaries, agents of the West and the CIA, in the same way that Trotsky and Lenin propagated that the sailors of Kronstadt in 1921 were agents of the imperialists and that the mutiny had been instigated by the French or that the Makhnovites and anarchists were robbers, SRs (Socialist-Revolutionaries ) were agents of the Germans, etc. The Hungarian workers rebels of the Chepel district, making fun of the Soviets and their local supporters, had put up a board writing "The 40,000 aristocrats and industrialists of Chepel welcome you."





Cornelius Kastoriadis wrote of the Hungarian Revolution and the Hungarian workers, "They proved by their actions that the difference between workers and "a state of workers'" is that between life and death. And that they would rather die fighting a "state of workers'" rather than living as workers under a "workers' state".



*demolition and destruction of Soviet symbols*



*Occupation of the secret police*



*Counter-revolutionaries who were lynched*







## ZAPATISTAS - ROJAVA - NORTHERN SYRIA

The Spanish Revolution was the last revolutionary undertaking that marked an entire era, that of the classical workers movement (1848-1939). It was the last revolution of a historical period that challenged the State as the mechanism that monopolizes the management of social affairs.

The triumph of statism and the defeat of the workers movement had disastrous consequences for the historical development of the class struggle and the social and class struggles. After World War II and the reconstruction of capitalism in ruined Europe, the field of social revolutions was transferred, in addition to the countries of "existing socialism", to the Third World, starting from the anti-colonial and national liberation movements and guerrilla warfares, in China, Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, Africa and elsewhere.

But all these revolutions adopted the nation-state as the model for "liberation" from the colonial yoke of the industrialized developed countries of the West, while

imitating at the economic and political level the totalitarian and authoritarian model of the Soviet Union, that is, the complete nationalization of the economy and of the means of production and the dictatorship of the state bureaucracy manned by the Bolshevik-type party which led the liberation movement.



However today, after the fall of bureaucratic capitalism - "existing socialism" which resulted in the disintegration of the Marxist Left internationally, two new revolutionary ventures, the Zapatista Revolution and the Rojava Northern Syria Revolution have come to dispel the myth that "Revolutions are phenomena of the distant past" and to show us what should be the goal of a social Revolution today. It is an irony of history that both ventures come from movements and guerrillas with a Marxist-Leninist orientation which evolved by rejecting the classical Marxist positions of the development of the productive forces as a precondition for communism and the dictatorship of the proletariat and "people's" state. In general, they rejected the State as a centralized-monopoly mechanism of power or

management of social affairs that may be used as a body of "liberation", even temporarily.



*Sub Comandante Marcos*



The Zapatistas based their venture on the ancient tradition of community lands (ejidos) owned by the indigenous peoples of Chiapas. This is a communitarian social organization where there is no property, no state, where the land belongs to the Community to be cultivated collectively.



*EZLN - Guerrilla Zapatista army*





The community council manages social affairs and land and is authorized by the assembly of community members. Within the EZLN-controlled zone, the Zapatista villages are interconnected in a federal structure. The Zapatista movement was born in an underdeveloped industrial area where the vast majority of the population is rural and was a reaction to the neoliberal storm caused by the Canada-US-Mexico Free Trade Agreement called NAFTA, by which the land of the natives, the community lands (ejidos) was handed over to multinational companies for exploitation, e.g. mining. That is why the EZLN started its action with the uprising on 1/1/1994, the day of the initiation of NAFTA.

The Zapatistas are an emblematic reference point in the anti-globalization movement that had developed in the second half of the 1990s and early 2000s. They were the first to organize in their territory the summer of 1996 the first International Gathering of Struggles and Resistance against Neoliberalism which was essentially the first international meeting of the anti-globalization movement.



These international meetings later continued as an answer to international meetings of world leaders and European Union supranational organizations, WTO, IMF, G8, as the 1997 Amsterdam European Union Summit, the WTO Seattle Summit in 1999, the IMF in Prague in 2000, the G8 in Genoa in 2001, the EU Summit in Thessaloniki in 2003.





Similar was the standpoint of the Kurdish revolutionary movement, the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), which was a typical Marxist-Leninist party that had been conducting guerrilla warfare against the Turkish state in Northern Kurdistan, aiming to create a national Kurdish socialist state. But since the late 1990s, and especially since the 2000 decade, creating a Kurdish nation-state has been rejected and the idea of a confederate social model called "Democratic Confederalism" was promoted, which is what they have been having since 2012 in northern Syria, in Kurdish-majority areas after the collapse of the Assad regime's state structures following the start of the Syrian civil war. However, this social model is also based on the participation of other peoples and ethnicities in the region (Arabs, Syrian Jacobites, Assyrians, Turkmen).

*(PYD - Assembly for the National Coordinating Committee for democratic change)*



The Syrian civil war, which was the result of the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 and evolved into a field of geostrategic conflict between the Western block of power (USA, Britain, France) on the one hand, Russia and Iran on the other, was the cause that today the Rojava Revolution and the experiment of Democratic Confederalism and Democratic Autonomy in the Kurdish regions of northern Syria are well known. It started from Komani on July 19, 2012, in the same city which in 2014 became known for the battle and the heroic resistance of People's Protection Units (YPG) and Women Protection Units (YPJ) which stopped the advance of the Islamic State which at the time it had the city under siege and which up to then seemed invincible.

This social revolutionary experiment is influenced to some extent by the libertarian communitarian ideas of the American libertarian intellectual, ecologist and communalist Murray Bookchin. It is a venture that rejects nation-state and nationalism, is not limited to national or regional borders, challenges the state as a mechanism for managing social affairs, promotes the decentralization of power as opposed to the centralism of the state. The management of social affairs is undertaken by the people themselves from the social base through communal structures, communes, assemblies and councils of municipalities and communities, where everyone can participate in the decision-making procedure and take responsible positions as elected and revoked representatives.



Democratic Confederalism and Democratic Autonomy is a kind of social self-government based on direct democracy. But the most important achievement of the Rojava Revolution is the emancipation of women, given that Kurdish society, like the societies of the Middle East in general, is at a semi-feudal stage where patriarchy

prevails and women are treated as inferior and lowstanding. But the women's Revolution within the Revolution they themselves carried out made them equal to men, they took positions of responsibility in the councils of municipalities and villages (a binary system is applied with the mandatory participation of a woman and a man in all positions), took administrative positions in the People's Protection Units, while, since 2013, there are separate, women- only armed forces, "Women's Protection Units", as well as women courts. All this is unprecedented for the traditional patriarchal Kurdish society. But it is also unprecedented for the "progressive" West.

In times of social revolutions and revolutionary ventures, women gain the position they deserve as equal to men through their own struggles for women's emancipation and prove to be equally capable of taking on not only positions of responsibility but also of fighting gun in hand. There cannot be a social revolution without the active participation and emancipation of women.





It is proven once more that for the creation of a free and just society revolution is necessary, which means the overthrow of the old world, and it is also proven that in order for revolutions to take place, armed struggle is necessary, since without the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) the experiment of the Democratic Confederalism and Democratic Autonomy in the three cantons of the Kurdish regions of Northern Syria could not



have happened, the communalist structures could not be protected, IS could not be repulsed and IS capital Raka occupied, while these forces are the ones who resisted the Turkish army when it had occupied Afrin nor in the recent Turkish invasion.





The Rojava Revolution is currently at a critical turning point, after the Turkish invasion in the region with the aim of creating a 30-kilometer-deep security zone in the territory of Rojava-Northern Syria. After fierce fighting and bombardment that hit mostly civilians, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) -an Arab-Kurdish alliance- chose to make a tactical deal with the Assad regime by allowing the Syrian army to return to the Turkish borders from where they had withdrawn in 2012 after the beginning of the Revolution. The international agreement between USA and Russia with Turkey, where they accepted the Turkish request that the Kurdish revolutionary forces withdraw at a depth of 30 kilometers, is against the Revolution and the project of the Democratic Confederalism. This revolutionary venture for years has been at the heart of an international geostrategic conflict between the world's great powers fighting to control Syria.

The Rojava Revolution is a shining example in our time and the lesson we have to learn is that Revolution is possible and we must make it happen it to the West itself, to the heart of the capitalist world.





### 3. COMMUNITY - COMMUNALISM

By the concept of community we do not mean, of course, the simple cohabitation of people in one geographical area, as it may be perceived in our time. A community is defined as a political, social, economic entity with autonomous characteristics - sometimes to a lesser extent, sometimes to a greater degree - by a central state authority. The Community (*Communitas* in latin) preceded the appearance of the state and survived almost to the present day in spite of the development of the centralized nation-state and the emergence of capitalism.

It is characterized by self-government and the freedom to make decisions on issues related to production, distribution of goods, management of common resources, education, culture, security, and the administration of justice. Such an entity, which evolves in harmony with the natural environment and is determined by it in all its functions, is the awe-inspiring adversary of centralized state power, which is by nature an enemy of any autonomous and uncontrolled political and social operation. It is also the awe-inspiring rival of the capitalist system, as a prerequisite for the existence of the community is the social solidarity between its members, as the existence and freedom of one presupposes the existence and functioning of the community. In the antipode of this social solidarity condition, capitalism cannot exist and develop without the social, cultural and moral domination of individualism and the undermining of the "backward and harmful to the development of the productive forces" social solidarity. In addition, community is

impossible to develop as an enemy of the environment, a condition that applies to capitalism. The community is an organic part of nature and is constantly interacting with it, to the extent that its development presupposes a balanced coexistence in solidarity with the natural environment, which is so decisive that violent interferences in nature lead to its inevitable dissolution. The community is understood as a living social natural organism and not a phenomenon defined by the above, while its development presupposes decentralization or even disappearance of its control by the state.

Today, communalism in the "political sense" is perhaps the only ultimate refuge for peoples and the only way out in solving the ecological problem, the only guarantee for the salvation of humans and the planet. Having experienced both states and communities and that of catastrophic capitalist imposition all over the world and nature, we can, through the re-establishment of communities, actually prove that their development presupposes autonomy, rupture with state power, abandonment of the centralized capitalist mode of production. Also, historical experience guides us so as to ensure economic equality between people, full freedom of women and their equal participation in political organization.

We can build on the information we can draw from the past and the history of our country and on the values of equality and freedom for all people, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, cultural background, through communalism and the autonomous political framework, to accumulate the knowledge we need to launch a social endeavor that will tackle economic and social divisions, bridge the gap between the rich and the poor and fight the enslavement of the many that poverty brings, and to reverse the catastrophe nature faces and lead to the rebirth of social solidarity.

Such a perspective is the guarantee for the peaceful coexistence of the people and the expansion of communalism is the guarantee for the avoidance of war. However, we must use the elements and tools history offers us, to try to outline in a more particular and practical way the type and form of organization that the proposal of the Confederation of Communities (Communes) could take. Such a historical record is necessary to make this target more tangible and specific, while the practical organizational characteristics of direct democracy in ancient Athens, the elements of autonomy involved by the later communities in Greece, the revolutionary tradition especially of the Spanish Revolution, and of course, the modern example of Rozava - N. Syria, have contributed -some of these examples to a lesser extent, others to a greater extent- to the structured proposal submitted here.

## **Ancient Athens**

Communalism in Greece has been an endemic element of social and political formation for thousands of years, without of course a single linear evolution. The

determining factor for its development was the special geomorphology of the place, the discontinuity of the landscape and its diversity. The community was -whenever it managed to develop- the result of the dynamic relationship between people and nature, shaping the occasional domestic world system accordingly. As for the phenomenon of direct democracy that manifested itself and was established in the ancient Athenian polity, it was in a dynamic relationship with the greek language, which developed a multidimensional and flexible structure because of the extraordinary for that time direct participation in the political operation of the city. In short, the "greatness" of the classical times of Athens that is so praised by the whole world, was born due to direct democracy, which direct democracy was born as the dialectic between people, nature, language and not at all as a miracle of the "Greek race", which, moreover, was multiracial.

The form that the Athenian Democracy took in the middle of 5th century BC was the result of a long political and social process that had begun centuries ago and of a long course of class conflicts. Decisive role in the birth of the Athenian Democracy was a bloody and long civil war between the poor and the rich that Dracon ignited with his laws. However, this was not the first time that the Athenians adopted democracy, as in many reports they spoke of the return to "fatherland's beloved polity". The Athenian democratic polity structured by Solon who was chosen by the Athenians to formulate a "new political system" and to stop the civil conflict due to the enslavement of many poor people who had mortgaged their freedom and that of that of their families, had characteristics of failed (e.g. Sparta, Lycurgus) or successful attempts to establish a democratic political system in other cities. The responsibility for the Athenian class war had been blamed by everyone - including Solon - on the rich, their arrogance and greed. Athenian Democracy was not a static, imposed regime from above, but a consequence of the given historical conditions and a need for the coexistence of the people in the region. With the forthcoming legislative interventions (e.g. by Cleisthenes) and mainly because of the organic relationship of the citizens to the freedoms provided by democracy, it may have managed to evolve into a direct democracy with the universal participation of all Athenian free citizens, but did not manage to evolve further by abolishing slavery and patriarchy, as women remained inferior, without the right to participate in political life. Although there were areas that never had slaves like the Arcadians, who were always opposed to slavery (see Pausanias "Arcadica", Aristotle) or abolished it, in Athens such a transcendence was never made and this fact, along with the exclusion of women from political life, was undoubtedly the black mark of Athenian Democracy.

Although it was a patriarchal and class society, there were several factors that prevented the creation of a gap between rich and poor. Its very democratic transformation, as a result of a fierce and long-lasting class war, had been grafted on by the abhorrence for excessive wealth and it set terms of immorality in many economic activities, such as usury. Besides, important people of the time such as

Themistocles, Aristides, Kimonas, according to Demosthenes lived in poor brick houses, as a result of their conscious attitude as Athenian citizens not to accept wealth as an individual condition, while the wealth of the city was seen in the public buildings that belonged to everyone. Judging by the escalation of political controversy inside Athens (with the dominant element being the strengthening of the anti-democratic attitude by the rich), we could say that the Athenian Democracy reached its limits due to its inability to extend political freedoms to women, to the metoikoi (who have relocated to Athens from another city), to eliminate social divisions and slavery, creating the appropriate social correlation for the drastic confrontation of class divisions which were also the constant causes for the eternal disputes over the undermining of the regime and the unity of the ancient City.

What we can infer from the ancient Athenian Democracy is its direct democratic character that was legally enshrined and pushed all Athenians to participate in political office, aiming to have no professional politicians, as they were considered corruptors and harmful for democracy. Or as Solon put it, "power wears out and damages, and its long-term exercise is corrupted and corrupts." Those who held office were not given power *carte blanche*, but for a one-year term (from the beginning of the Panathenaic celebration until their start next year), they were publicly audited every 36 days and dismissed by the citizens if they deemed them inadequate, dangerous and corrupted. Initially, thetes - the large class of workers - was excluded from holding office, but participated in the highest body, the Citizens Assembly, where all proposals for the operation of the Municipality were ratified or rejected, while they also participated in the exercise of judicial power (the Iliaia court was composed of 6.000 civil judges over the age of 30, elected by lot in a total of 30,000 free citizens). The omnipotence of the people's courts in ancient Athens was a dominant feature of direct Athenian Democracy. After the victory in the Persian Wars in 480-479 BC, the Athenians demanded full political rights, which were ratified by constitutional reforms. Since then, thetes participated equally in all positions based on the principle of everybody having the right to be elected by everybody. Basic principles of the Athenian Democracy -despite the undeniable black spots aforementioned- and especially its organizational structure may contribute to the formation of a model of direct democratic social organization linked to the history of this place. For the ancient Athenians, the most important condition for the salvation of the city is that none of the citizens is neither rich nor poor. The class structure of society remained while significant restrictions were placed on the extent of wealth one could have.

They defined democracy as "the political system in which the citizens are appointed various offices by ballot" (Aristotle Rhetor. 1365b30 from the Epitaph of Pericles) -it was a combination of lottery and election- an unprecedented practice that ensured political equality, in terms that are preposterous for modern "democratic" regimes. Universal participation in the functions and institutions of

the city was a moral duty that everyone had to serve. This formed a political conscience in all citizens, and that was the true meaning of freedom, which was inseparable from the political consciousness of participation in the commons, it was not an individual affair, transcending the individuals as units, was defined as the freedom of the whole of the city, and was identified with the values of the whole of society. In other words, it was different from the incomplete notion of "freedom" today, which is identified with the notion of "one's right" and has a negative position, that is, it concerns a legal establishment of a framework of the actions of the individual. In ancient Athens a free person is not meant outside the community while what we call a peaceful citizen who does not participate in public at that time was treated as "useless" (see Pericles's Epitaph) while the concept of the individual had a particularly negative meaning. Therefore, distancing oneself from politics was seen as a negative and dangerous factor that undermined democracy.

The participation of all citizens was sought by the city not only in times of peace and war, but also in times of civil conflict, since inaction in such cases undermined the political system and revealed a reduced sense of social and political responsibility. In the Attic Constitution there was a catapult of an article concerning the individuals that wrote: "Anyone who in the event of a civil rebellion does not take the part of any of the opponents, should be sentenced to the deprivation of his political rights and of his citizenship". This legislation prevented some e.g. to remain observers of a conflict waiting to see its outcome in order to take the side of the winner. This tactic was forbidden by law in the Athenian Democracy.

### **Communalism in Greece through the centuries**

Communalism in Greece extends throughout ancient and modern history. All systems of power limited it, exploited it, distorted it, but none of them was as damaging to it as capitalism. The Community was not just a form of social coexistence and above all it was not a "pre-capitalist" and "necessary to overcome" social organization. Its characteristics and role were social, political and economic and it developed inversely proportional to the centralism of the respective central government. In ancient Greece the different tribes, diversity and fragmentation of the land favored the development of different forms of political, social and economic organization. Their decline occurred with the expansion of the Roman Empire and the supremacy of Roman Law. The cities of antiquity disintegrated due to the enslaved attitude of many Greeks who sought to acquire the status of Roman citizen, thus not recognizing the local polity and law. They were accountable to a central government, adopted Roman law and caused the dissolution of the ancient community system. A historical version of the concept of "Romios" is that of the derogatory designation for the Greeks, who paid Romans to buy them as slaves and then free them, so as to acquire through the process the title of Roman citizen.



"Romioi" themselves were despised by the Romans, as they were related to their voluntary enslavement to a sovereign system of power. The erosion of democracy by the wealthy followers of the previous oligarchy is linked to the emergence of principles and values contrary to those cultivated by direct democracy and receptive to phenomena such as those mentioned above. Eventually, with the domination of Roman law, which was adored by the devotees of modern nation-states as an example and became the basis for modern state law, the centralized form of power prevailed, dissolving community law and the communal way of political and social organization.

Political, economic, cultural, and life degradation followed the eventual domination of Roman law, and in the following centuries communities declined or flourished according to the intensity of central government and its degree of centralism, while the fall of communalism not at all accidentally was followed by the intensity of individualistic monasticism in the medieval years, which functioned as a lever of slavery and submission. Historical sources state that the Ottoman rule had positive consequences for the development of communalism after 1453, in relation to the period of the disintegration of Byzantium (Empire of Constantinople) which became more intense with the Crusades. The Ottoman Empire made compromises with the Orthodox Church, allied itself with it against the papacy, and the sultans limited themselves to collecting taxes through the tax collectors. The pashas dominated and often terrorized the villages and the countryside with plundering and under this condition the people gathered around the communities, which were often formed for security reasons in semi-mountainous and mountainous areas. The absence of a centralized model of administration, legislation and judiciary, ensured the necessary freedom for the development of communalism in the following centuries, with its synergistic productive activities, communal customary law and organizational political functions.

An important role for communal development had the arrival of new populations in the 16th century, the increase of the local population and the replacement of the non-functional clan by the institution of the community. That period shows that even in times of dark occupation and in the absence of any local political power (always given the absence of a centralized political, economic and judicial model of power from the occupying power), people not only coexisted without the state's presence, but especially in its absence, they formed functionally and politically autonomous communities, while they also managed to develop economically. Strong community institutions, community solidarity and the formation of a common consciousness through the community and against the conqueror, became the ingredients for the Revolution of 1821, which was founded by the communities themselves and by a catalytic element that preceded the Revolution, the emergence of Klefuria (guerrilla activity), a phenomenon that also sprang from the spirit of freedom that emerged from the communities. Usually the communities, although the presence of the tax collectors was subversive, were the "workshops" towards

the manifestation of the Revolution. Their disintegration began with the founding of the newly formed Greek state from 1830 onwards. While communalism was part of the popular tradition from ancient times and flourished even during the Turkish occupation, the Greek state after 1830 imitated and imposed traditions and systems foreign to the Greek folk tradition, such as the centralism of the nation-state and the bourgeois parliamentarism. The whole political spectrum from the first Governor, Kapodistrias, the Bavarians, the governments of the 19th century, Venizelism and anti-Venizelism, the left and even the modern parties after World War II and the regime change period (after 1974), sought and imposed Europeanization and westernization of the country ignoring and rejecting the local tradition of communalism and direct democracy. Centralized parliamentarism, imposed from above, completely dissolved communities as a form of autonomous political, economic and social organization. The dissolution was gradual.

The destructive tax policy of the Greek state for the repayment of the loans of the "liberation" that put the country in debt, but also for the maintenance of an expensive state machine, led many communities to revolt and a large part of the population to bitterly confess that "It was better during the Turkish rule"

A decisive factor in the disintegration of the communities was the removal from them of the common forage management in 1880, ie the single public meadow, which was community land and private set-aside fields used for grazing, which in turn offered fertilizer for the soil. This is the abolition of an institution of 6.000 years, not only in Greece but in all the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The joint fallow fields and the renting of meadows to shepherds outside the community brought to the communal fund a common income used for community projects, through which the problems of the residents of the community were solved collectively. Land improvement and water projects were mandatory for any production process, for the survival of the community and only collectively could they be implemented.

Another important and characteristic function of the community was that it provided for community resources for difficult times. Community wheat, which provided a sufficient amount of bread at the initial cost or less in hard times, was a custom practiced by the communities. Community warehouses where the wheat was stored, ensured that the community would not experience any famine and community solidarity that no member of the community would go hungry. In the secondary sector the communal system played a key role. Guilds, trade groups, "comrade-seamen's companies" sprang from the communities where everyone participated equally in both profits and losses. Cooperatives grew thicker under Turkish rule and flourished in the 18th century. The functions of the communities were political (the fundamental institution of the community, the general assembly, was abolished by the Greek state with the appointment of community officials), social, cultural, economic, productive, fiscal, educational.

The autonomy of the communities was often violated by the domination of the tax collectors who in some areas especially e.g. Macedonia, exercised intensely

abusive power under the protection of their privileged relationship with the Turks or the Church. Class inequalities and the power of the tax collectors often led - especially in the Macedonian communities- to violence and conflict. The dominance of the whole community over the tax collectors in the case of Epanomi in 1919, where a poor peasant community leader and the community council counterattacked the abuses and arbitrariness of the common resources of the community by the tax collectors imposing their punishment, shows how the community could and did organize the collective retaliation against the power of the "prominent".

Under Ottoman rule, communities had jurisdiction and exercised judicial power. They always tried to avoid the intervention of the Turkish authorities in their internal affairs and whoever resorted to Turkish courts was treated as a traitor and was expelled from them. They also had their own security forces. They created important public works such as drainage works, roads, bridges, etc., which the newly formed Greek state allowed to be destroyed since it did not provide resources for their maintenance. In the fiscal sector, taxes to the Ottoman state and tithe were a Community affair. The community itself reduced the tax burden according to the tax capacity of the farmers and the quality of cultivation, relieving anyone who could not lift the financial burden.

Communities as a political-economic and social entity throughout the history of this place, flourished and declined according to the degree of intensity of the central state power, highlighting the possibility of the existence of autonomous forms of society. Class divisions were not, of course, absent from them, but the very existence of the community ensured, on the one hand, that the gap between the rich and the poor was contained, covered the survival needs of its people and maintained its solidarity between its members. The communities developed in Greece as a result of the geophysical morphology of the area and developed accordingly throughout the Mediterranean. But it was not just a Greek, Balkan or Mediterranean phenomenon. Communities and autonomous cities, especially during the Middle Ages, developed throughout Europe and Russia, until a powerful power eroded, undermined, and crushed them militarily when they erected a wall of resistance to the expansive warlords and greedy princes and kings. Where an organized and strong central government was absent, the people formed self-governing communities and cities that ensured -some to a lesser extent, others to a greater degree- a balanced solidarity coexistence. A condition for their development and prosperity was their autonomy and in many cases, especially in the free medieval cities of Europe (communes), communalism and its autonomy showed high creativity, which people liberate only in a free environment.

### 3. FOR A CONFEDERATE NON-STATE AND CLASSLESS SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

**H**ow do we imagine a social Revolution today in Greece and worldwide?

How will we replace capital and the state if they are overthrown and abolished through a revolutionary process?

How will we build a just social organization, ecological, anti-sexist, without exploitation and oppression, a society of economic equality and political freedom?

What should be the positions of a modern revolutionary movement that we need to work out now?

Based on the previous historical experience of the workers' revolutionary movement (1848- 1939), it is certain that the state as a centralizing mechanism of power, as a mechanism of class domination, should be abolished immediately, without intermediate transitional stages. In place of the state, a federal social organization can be built, which will be based on the socialization of the means of production, services, utilities and the decentralization of power, the decentralization of the management of all social affairs and will be structured in at least three levels.

Since the state is abolished as a super-centralized mechanism of power, the management of social affairs is taken over by the Municipalities (Communities) which will be the cells and the primary level of a confederation in a national territory or even in an international (or global) confederation that may include more than one ethnicity and peoples. The example of the Federation of Northern Syria today is indicative.

How will the Municipalities (Communes) self-govern and manage themselves? The main body of power or management of social affairs will be the Assembly of the Citizens, is the inhabitants of the Municipality or as it became known in history according to the example of ancient Athens, the Assembly of the Citizens. The Assembly of the Citizens will take all the decisions that concern the social life, the economic activity, that is, the production and disposal of the goods, the management of the water and the resources of the municipality, the local (urban) transport and transportation, energy (to some extent) , the cleansing service and waste management (recycling - biological treatment), the maintenance of public order, the administration of justice, the management of educational institutions, hospitals or health centers located within its boundaries.

All these services and structures -hospitals, educational institutions, health centers, public transport, transportation, water and energy services, tele-communications- will be socialized, the goods and services they will provide will be public and their employees will be employees of the Municipality (Commune) and will work for the Municipality (Commune).

Thus, decentralization is achieved to a great extent and the Municipalities (Communes) will have a great degree of independence, autonomy and self-direction - self-government.

E.g. a Municipality in a rural area will be able to decide what products it will produce, in what quantities according to the needs of the inhabitants, their knowledge and traditions and according to the needs of the people as a whole who live within the boundaries of the confederation. Not as it is today that the international capital and the multinational companies that control the global food industry impose a division of labor of agricultural production and determine which country will produce what, in what quantities, what prices and where agricultural production is intended.

E.g. In Greece, the scale of cotton growing, especially in the 1980s, was promoted by the EEC, to which the country had joined in 1981.

Cotton cultivation that developed mainly in the large plains of Thessaly, central Macedonia, in Serres and Boeotia, did not concern any domestic social need since 90% of the production was exported to the developed countries of Europe e.g. France, Germany. Responding to the lure of rich European Community subsidies, tens of thousands of farmers gave up traditional crops (e.g. wheat) and engaged in cotton farming, the production of which was exported to EEC (later EU) countries.

Apart from the fact that this monoculture did not concern the domestic social needs of the population, it also had serious ecological consequences, especially for the Thessalian plain which was the granary of the country. Because it was an intensive water-consuming cultivation and required large amounts of water as well as a large quantities of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, Thessalian farmers drilled deeper and deeper to irrigate their fields. This resulted in the depletion of the underground aquifer in many areas of the Thessalian plain and thus the pharaonic work of diverting Acheloos, the second largest river in the country, was scheduled, since the drillings and the waters of Pinios river were not enough to cover the needs of the farmers. Along with the depletion of the underground aquifer, the intensive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides depleted the soil and the yield of the land and created the phenomenon of desertification.

Since the mid-1990s, CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) gradually changed, resulting in reduced Community subsidies for cotton and cuts to other agricultural products. This led to the reduction of agricultural income, the gradual reduction of the rural population -which was an EU demand for Greece- the destruction of small farmers since without subsidies they it was hard to make ends meet. This provoked large-scale mobilizations, occupation of highways in the winter of 1996-97. Agricultural mobilizations happened since then almost every year after the end of the growing season so that farmers can press the state to boost their incomes.

In other cases, the policy of the Greek state, dictated by the international capital and the multinational companies, degraded domestic agricultural production,



e.g. fruit that could be used in the production of juices and canning, which were deliberately not absorbed by the domestic market and ended up in refuse areas because the state promoted the interests e.g. of the American multinational Coca-Cola and its products imported on favorable terms. This is also the case in other sectors such as meat, milk or olive oil, where, while domestic production can meet domestic needs, they promoted imported products. And of course, a very important problem brought by the capitalist way of production is the use of genetically modified products and seeds. Mutated foods have now invaded production, our lives, the food chain, with incalculable consequences for health, the human organism, nature. The idealization of profit brings with it an irreversible alteration of beings and nature and all it promises is an ultimate mass destruction.

These examples show that international capital sees the individuals, the peoples, the workers, the earth, the environment as consumable tools for extracting as much profit as possible for the supranational economic elite and does not care about the needs of the people, the ecosystem balance, the survival of all. A federal social organization -stateless, classless and ecological- aims to meet the basic needs of people in relation to the balance of the ecosystem and therefore should promote measures for the self-sufficiency of production that will meet social needs. And this is done outside the framework of the market economy and state centralism.

## **Decentralization and Ecology**

The centralism of the modern industrial nation-state is historically intertwined with the shrinking of agriculture in developed countries, migration to large cities, the gigantism of the parasitic and counterproductive tertiary sector of services and the state parasitic bureaucracy.

A confederate stateless and classless social organization should promote a voluntary population decentralization, a shift of employment to the primary and secondary sectors of the economy (agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, processing, distribution of goods).

Decentralization of power does not only mean the elimination of the market economy and the state, and that of the model of centralism in economic and political level respectively, but it also means decentralization of the population, so as to achieve a balance between rural land and urban areas and with first priority, guided by ecological balance, the respect for land and nature, flora and fauna.

This, especially today, at a time when there is an irreversible evolution in the climatic conditions that have disturbed the ecological balance of the planet due to capitalist development, is even more imperative.

The most basic reason that makes a global social Revolution a one way solution nowadays, is the fact that the planet due to the existence of the capitalist system and its development, due to the overexploitation of resources this development entails, and the pollution caused by irreversible climate change caused by the burning of petroleum products and the greenhouse effect, is heading for a slow death.

Revolution is not an imperative and necessary issue only because of the exploitation of humans by man or the growing tendency of the system towards totalitarianism. It is now a matter of life and death for our own survival, for the survival of the earth and of nature, of the species of the whole ecosystem on which we depend. A Social Revolution will primarily have an ecological character.

It is a priority for a confederate union in Greece to gradually make independent of e.g. the country's electricity generation from lignite combustion and from the thermal power plants that currently produce around 70% of the total electricity, and to promote alternative and renewable energy sources (RES) -photovoltaic, wind turbines- with the ultimate goal to cover eventually 100% of the country's energy production.

In a stage of transition to more environmentally friendly forms of energy, which can emerge perspective after the use of technological methods excluded by the strong economic interests of our time, even lesser use of lignite will be necessary. Nevertheless a decentralized political, social and economic model of organization, the decongestion of large urban centers, the rebirth of the province and of communities much more harmonious than before, both as a social venture and in accordance to the peculiarities of Greek nature, and of small-scale productive units that will utilize and enhance the unique diversity of nature in this country, all these prevent the need for an energy policy analogous to the capitalist model of economic development. On the other hand, nature itself that provides this place with abundant solar and wind energy, combined with the most revolutionary forms of technology, can solve the energy problem without environmental burden.

In terms of agricultural production, it is a priority to remove intensified monocultures which use chemical fertilizers that contaminate the soil and poison products and food, and which over-pump the ground water horizon, deplete the soil and lead to desertification and salinization of the underground aquifer in coastal areas. It is a major priority to shift to a higher quality organic agriculture with softer farming methods, the promotion of which will be undertaken by the Municipalities and Communities in the rural areas of the country with the aim of self-sufficiency and meeting basic social needs.

In general, it is inevitable that a social revolution will not only be a revolution on a political or economic level, but will also be a revolution on a cultural level, a critique of the modern industrial way of life. E.g. waste management, recycling, the promotion of a gentle and as far as possible organic farming, of the use of public socialized means of transportation and transport, and the parallel reduction of

private vehicle use, the non-circulation of private vehicles in the center of cities and villages where only public vehicles will be moving for the supply and disposal of goods, the construction of ecological and energy houses, the reduction of the use of concrete and energy-intensive construction materials, all these contributing to the respect of the earth and the environment, in the reduction of the exhaust gases responsible for the greenhouse effect, demand a radical change in our way of life, an ecological revolution in our daily life, which, in order to be effected, requires the de-commercialization of social activities and relationships.

Of course it is necessary, if we want to save the planet from the slow death to which we have condemned it and build a social ecological organization of a federal character, we must gradually disengage from the use of petroleum on which capitalist development is based and for which wars are being waged to control its stocks. In our time, the alarm bells are ringing for the irreversible damage to the environment that has been caused and that is beginning to provoke from below social reactions for the salvation of the planet, we as fighters should aim to make everyone become conscious of the fact that capitalism, the centralized model of economic and political power with its principles and values that makes profit the end of every human activity, that has linked success with power and control, that drives business "to grow or die", promotes immorality in the pursuit of profit and "success, which has as a precondition for development the dissolution of social solidarity and the imposition of selfish interest, it is impossible to leave room for the solution of the environmental problem. That would constitute the self-abolition of capitalism and the centralized political powers that support it, which is impossible. It is our duty to highlight the economic, political, social and moral incompatibility of the modern system of power with the natural balance and survival of the planet. As our duty to promote as the only way out of the environmental problem that has become a cornerstone for the survival of the human species and every form of life in the planet, the overthrow of capitalism and the state and the creation of a revolutionary model of economic, political and social organization through decentralization, ecology, the development of new values and principles, the main one being social solidarity and solidarity between people and nature.

## **Direct democracy**

The implementation of the way of managing the social affairs of the Municipality (Commune) will be done through an elected and immediately revocable municipal council.

Members of the municipal council are those who are elected and are accountable to the assembly of the residents of the Municipality (Citizens Assembly) or to the assembly of the village for a limited period of time and who assume positions of responsibility for the management of various sectors, e.g. the municipal

organization of local urban transport or the observance of public safety or the cleansing and waste management of the city.

Members of the municipal council can also be the members of the Workers' Councils of socialized enterprises that are under the workers' self-management and are held accountable to the meetings of the employees and the assembly of the residents of the Municipality.

The frequency of convergence of the Assembly of the inhabitants of the Municipality (Citizens Assembly), the number of members of the municipal council, their term of office, the way of abolishing trust to the members of the municipal council (immediate revocation) are up to the Assembly of the Municipality inhabitants elected by the municipal council.

However, in order to avoid the creation of a "professional" caste of political representatives, as is the case in the bourgeois "representative democracy", the term of office of the members of the municipal council should be limited to one year and not to 4- 5 years, as is the case today for the members of the bourgeois parliament and the members of the local self-government.

E.g. even in ancient Athenian Democracy (6<sup>th</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century BC), all those who held positions of responsibility and offices, were elected and controlled by the Citizens Assembly (eg generals, public treasurers, responsible for the sanctuaries and city festivals, etc.), were on a one-year term and could not do more than 2 terms, except the generals.

The same applies to the representatives of the 10 tribes of Attica who sent 50 members alternately each time to the House of Five Hundred and made legislative proposals that had to be approved and voted by the Assembly of the Citizens. Thus all those who had political rights, that is, all citizens, in turn participated in the House of Five Hundred. The Assembly of the Citizens which met every 8-10 days or 40 times a year consisted of a few thousand free citizens who decided on everything:

1. The election of responsible officials (e.g. generals)
2. Legislative - administrative issues
3. Defining foreign policy (conducting war or peace)
4. The imposition of occasional taxation in times of war.
5. The execution of municipal projects
6. The granting or the deprivation of the right to citizenship.
7. The intervention in matters of serious conviction (prosecution) and in those that concerned the security of the Community (City)
8. The publication of resolutions that had the force of law.

It is true that free citizens and those with political rights were a minority in relation to the general population. There were the slaves and even the wives of free citizens had no political rights.

Although it was a class and patriarchal society, all classes of free citizens, from landowners to thetes (salaried workers) participated in the Citizens Assembly. Even today, many of the rights of the free citizens of ancient Athens are unthinkable for the current citizens of the bourgeois "democracies" whose only political right is to go to the polls every 4-5 years.

Despite its shortcomings, the ancient Athenian and Greek Democracy was a shining example in an era when there were monarchical and authoritarian-imperial systems of government, e.g. Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia, Rome, China.

It was a point of reference even for the workers' revolutionary movement. Even the Spanish anarchists of the 1930s called their hangouts "Athenian" in honor of the Athenian Democracy, a fact confirmed by the well-known comrade Abel Paz who lived through the Spanish Revolution as a teenager and came to Athens in July 1996 for the anniversary of the 60 years of the Spanish Revolution.

The Assembly of the inhabitants of the Municipality (Citizens Assembly) and the municipal Council or the Council of the community (village) have executive and legislative responsibilities.

The Municipal or Communal Councils in these cases are directly controlled by the Assemblies of the inhabitants of the Municipalities and Communities and are in essence governmental bodies, bodies of self-management and self-government.

The example of the Paris Commune governed by a 95-member council -the majority of artisans, workers, employees, craftsmen, ordinary people- elected by the majority of the 400,000 inhabitants of Paris, ie 229.000, is illustrative.

We may also see the example of the Commune of Kronstadt in 1921 and the workers' and especially the peasant's collectives of the Spanish Revolution of 1936 -'39 which were self-governed through workers' and peasants' councils elected and controlled by the assemblies of the workers and the peasants of the villages.

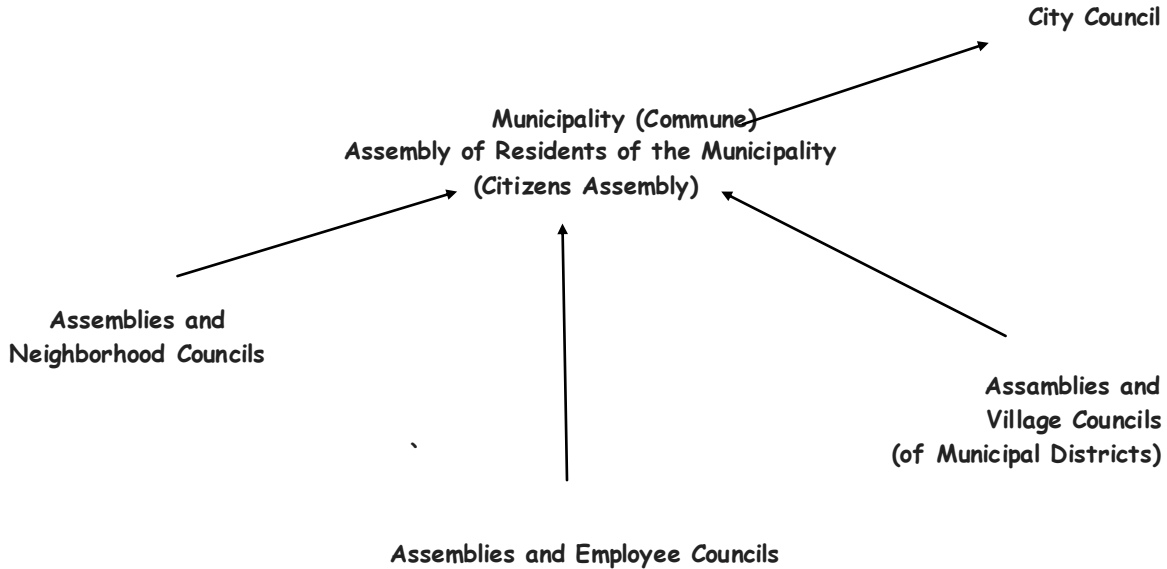
Confederalism is not only a libertarian social organization that unites free cities-municipalities-villages or towns, but this federal model can be applied to large cities.

E.g. in metropolises such as Thessaloniki and Athens where more than 1 million people live, there will be a federal model within their urban territory with the aim of decentralizing and controlling the social affairs managed by the people-residents in each neighborhood or district of the municipalities of Attica or the urban complex of Thessaloniki and other municipalities (see the example of the Commune of Aleppo).

There will also be popular neighborhood assemblies with their councils that will take over the management of social affairs at a neighborhood or a district level. The neighborhood council as well as the workers' councils of socialized enterprises will be functional primary parts of the self-government of a municipality and will send representatives to the municipal council.



(Layout of the self-administrative structure of the Municipality)



The crucial element of the proper functioning of direct democracy is the very personal presence of the citizens-residents of the Municipality decision making, whether it means participation and presence in the neighborhood assembly of a Municipality or participation and presence in the Municipal Assembly (Citizens Assembly).

In the case of a village or a town or a municipality with a few thousand inhabitants, it is very easy for the majority of the inhabitants to be present in person at the assembly of the village or municipality. But in the case of a metropolitan municipality with a population of hundreds of thousands or more than 1 million, it is impossible to speak about the personal presence and participation of the majority of active citizens-residents in a general assembly. How do we solve this problem in a federal social organization that operates in a directly democratic way?

The solution lies in the self-government decentralization of the big cities-municipalities where executive responsibilities in managing social affairs will be taken over by the neighborhood assemblies in each metropolitan municipality which will send representatives to the central municipal council of the Municipality. This may apply in Greece for large municipalities in the Attica basin (e.g. Athens, Piraeus, Peristeri, Kallithea, etc.) or for the municipalities of Thessaloniki, Patras, Heraklion of Crete, Volos, Larissa. In other municipalities of the country with a smaller population, it is much easier for the majority of the citizens to attend a general assembly in person. It should be noted that in recent decades in Greece,

the concentration of power has advanced even more inside local "self-government", since with the 3 bills of "Kapodistrias" in 1998, "Kallikratis" in 2010 and "Klesthensis" very recently, villages have disappeared, ie the Communities as even partially self-governing units and the villages have been merged into large centralized municipalities as municipal districts.

If there was proper preparation and it was the wish of the people and citizens, a confederate decentralized social organization- product of a deep social revolution-, would reinstate the villages (communities) as self-governing units, which would help along with other measures to re-enliven social life in the province as many villages in Greece for economical and political reasons (financial abandonment by the state, poverty, migration, civil war) are deserted while others have only a few aged inhabitants.

The main argument of the supporters of statehood and the so-called bourgeois "democracy" is that direct democracy, the Assembly of the Citizens, true democracy through which a confederal organization can operate, is not a realistic and applicable proposal in modern societies, because direct democracy was characteristic of other eras and local small micro-communities that were economically self-sufficient, where everyone knew each other and everyone could take part in the decision-making process, e.g. Citizens Assembly, House of the Five Hundred, Iliaia in Ancient Athens or other cases in other Greek cities or in cities of Mesopotamia in 8th millennium BC or in the free cities of the Middle Ages.

It is this issue exactly that is solved by the greatest degree of decentralization that can take place in a federal social organization, where not only market economy and the state will have disappeared, but where there will also be decentralization of the population with a view to greater rural ecological balance between province-city.

A social Revolution aimed at a federal non-state, classless and ecological society, a confederate union of Municipalities and Communities (Communes) must go in the opposite direction of that through which capitalism and the nation-state evolved, where the greatest historical concentration of power was promoted.

That is, while capitalism with the industrial revolution promoted a centralized model of power, subjugated the countryside to the cities, forced large sections of the rural population to gather and emigrate to work as workers in industry and as servants, and then developed the tertiary sector of services and a huge staff bureaucracy, a social revolution aimed at creating a decentralized confederal social organization, should promote a reverse evolution and fragmentation of the big cities where the majority of the population has gathered, especially in the developed capitalist countries, and to create cities and urban centers on a more humane de-massed scale where the feeling of community, solidarity, mutual aid will prevail.

E.g. monstrous creations of modern capitalism such as New York, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Istanbul, London, Paris, Moscow, Shanghai, Athens should shrink.

## National Confederate People's Assembly and Confederate People's Council

In addition to the primary level of the Confederation, ie the Municipalities and the Communities, at the secondary level there may be a Confederation of Municipalities and Communities at the level of a certain geographical unit, ie at the level of prefecture or region. This confederation at the county or regional level will be linked and coordinated through a prefectural or regional council elected by the inhabitants of the municipalities and villages and controlled by the municipal councils.

At a national and tertiary level there will be a Confederate People's Assembly consisting of representatives-envoys of the Municipalities (Communes) of the entire national territory who will be elected and directly revocable.

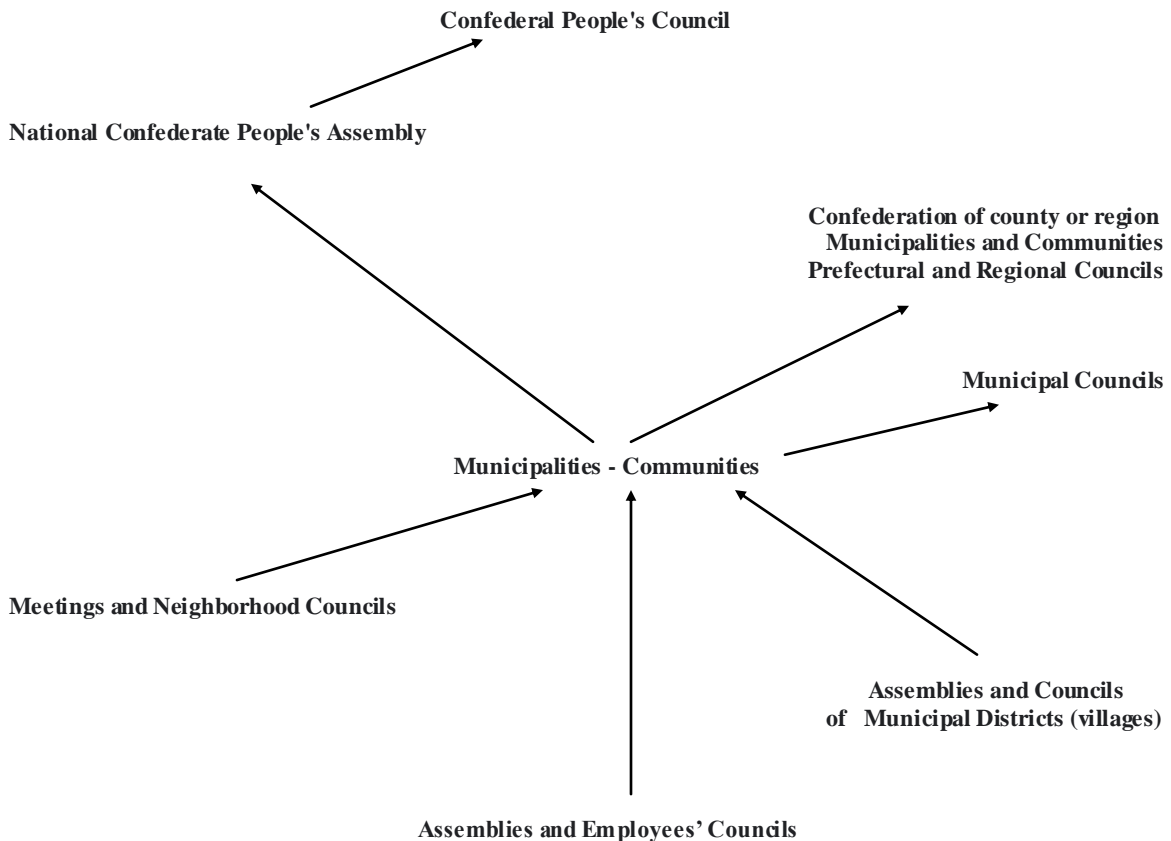
What will the responsibilities of this higher body be? It will have responsibilities related to areas that will cover the entire national territory and that cannot be left to local communities, municipalities and communities, such as the country's defense, relations with foreign countries -that is, with other peoples, confederations, states, etc.- control and management of key sectors of the socialized economy of enterprises such as electricity, telecommunications, intercity transport and goods' transport, coastal shipping, railways, civil aviation, the public works sector at national level e.g. highways, construction of roads outside municipalities, ports, bridges, etc.

E.g. The management of electricity throughout the country cannot be left to the responsibility of local communities, the municipalities of Ptolemaida, Amyntaio, Aliveri, Megalopolis since 70% of the country's electricity is produced from the lignite fields of these areas and thermal power plants. Certainly the local communities, the Municipalities of these areas will have a say on issues related to the environment that is polluted by the activity of the lignite plants or on labor issues since the lignite mines and the thermal power plants employ residents of the municipalities, on the borders of whose lignite fields are located. But the control and management of electricity generation throughout the country cannot be left in the hands of local municipalities and their councils, including hydroelectric installations or renewable energy sources (RES). The same applies to other sectors such as long-distance transport and transportation, telecommunications, the country's defense, etc.

The Confederate People's Assembly consists of representatives of the self-governing Municipalities of the country that constitute the primary level of the Confederation. It will have clear legislative powers and the Confederal People's Council will be elected from it, ie those who will be responsible for the various sectors that are in the responsibilities of this Assembly.

E.g. In the sectors of telecommunications, transport and communications, there will be those who will constitute the Commission or the Telecommunications, Transport and Communications Council. There will be something similar for the sector of Energy, Defense, Foreign Affairs, Public Works.

These decisions of the Councils can be controlled by the Municipal Assemblies that will be able to give the final approval, thus maintaining the power of the root organizations in making and executing decisions. Regarding the economic-productive sector, the first word is given to the Municipalities (Communes) and the Communities, depending on the potential of each region and the products that it can provide for itself as well as for the other regions. A tertiary body in the economy that will coordinate the production and distribution of products throughout the territory is necessary and this role can be played by a Council of Finance of the Confederation which will essentially execute the decisions of the primary bodies.



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At a community-municipal level, any problem can be solved through solidarity financial support in sectors or production processes which are either lagging behind or facing unforeseen problems (eg weather conditions), based on the model followed in the past by several communities in Greece. However, because these organizational forms were closed ones and their structures were aimed at local self-sufficiency, a confederation of the kind we propose also requires the solidarity of all Communities-Municipalities with each other. Therefore, any surplus will be exploited and directed primarily through the regional bodies, the Assemblies of the regions in areas where there is a deficit, while the management of the deficits and surpluses of the production of the whole territory will be done at the national level. That is, the economic policy at the national level will be the responsibility of the revocable representatives who will come from the primary and secondary bodies of the Confederation at any time.

In conclusion, in a federal system, many responsibilities that in a state belong to the central government, such as the sectors of production and economy, industry, agriculture, security, health, education, justice, etc., will be in the charge of the independent and self-governing Municipalities and Communities of the territory. And this is where the fundamental difference with the centralist system of government that prevails today lies.

Confederalism, decentralization and direct democracy give people the opportunity, on a social basis, to control and manage everything, all social affairs and to take life into their own hands, either by their personal presence and participation in the Assemblies of Municipalities or the Workers' Assemblies either by their controlled representation in the municipalities, the regions and the National Confederate People's Assembly or by assuming the position of representative.

Many anarchists today have the distorted view that anarchism and the libertarian tradition are incompatible with representation and electoral processes. Apart from the fact that this is not the case, a fact which is confirmed by the history of the anarchist movement itself (eg Spain, Kronstadt, Paris Commune, Makhnovtsina), it is obligatory to answer the question: how could a social organization function when the state and the market economy would have disappeared? We should not confuse the electoral processes of bourgeois "democracy" where the only participation of the citizens in the political life is limited to going to the polls every 4 years and not being able to control the representatives and the government, with the direct democratic processes where it is possible to control and manage the power, provided there is a federal



decentralized system of personal participation in neighborhood, village or municipality assemblies and the direct control of the municipal council, i.e. the representatives who execute the decisions of the residents' assembly.

The confederate social organization either at the primary level, ie in the Municipalities and Communities, or at the tertiary level, in the National Confederate People's Assembly will function through the representation and electoral procedures for the election of municipal and community councils and the election of members of the National Confederate People's Assembly and the Confederate People's Council.

Confederalism, decentralization and direct democracy are features of libertarian tradition and anarchism. E.g. in the draft of the organization of the Libertarian Communist Society entitled "The Confederate Vision of Libertarian Communism", which was presented at the CNT flash Congress in May 1936 in Zaragoza 2 months before the Franco coup and the beginning of the Spanish Revolution, section "Internal operation of the Commune", there is a clear reference to the "process of electing the community councils, which is intended to settle the contradictions arising from the different population communities, aiming at the political decentralization of the big cities and their transformation into communes".

It was on this position that the hundreds and thousands of peasants' and workers' communes of the Spanish Revolution of 1936-39, which were structured at the federal level, that they relied.

Procedures for the election of voted representatives are also carried out in the Federation of Northern Syria, as provided in the Social Contract of the Federation that came out the Revolution in Rojava - Northern Syria and that has many common characteristics with the libertarian tradition.

Confederalism is the denial of state centralism. It is the way to build a truly free society, a society of economic equality and political freedom where there will be Municipalities (Communities) on a more humane scale than today, where there will be a sense of community, solidarity and mutual aid, where everyone, people of all genders will have access to basic goods because everything will be socialized and everyone will be able to take part in the decision-making process by participating in the Municipal Assemblies (Citizens Assembly), as well as all will have the right to represent the Municipality as members elected and directly revocable, either in the municipal council or in the national Confederate People's Assembly and to have positions of responsibility.

Of course, in the event of a social Revolution in Greece aimed at building libertarian communism and communalism on a confederate basis, the construction of such a social organization could not be completed in a short time, however the foundations for this would be laid at the beginning.

Libertarian communism, stateless communism, stateless and classless society is based on the socialization of the means of production and of all structures related

to education, health, transport, transportation, energy, raw materials and wealth resources.

Regarding industry and structures such as health and education, forced expropriation and socialization is easier to achieve from the first moment of the revolutionary process because its benefits are more easily understood by employees and people in general, if it is made clear that socialization is a completely different thing from nationalization. In the first case the management is undertaken by the Municipalities (Communes) including the working people and in the second case the management is undertaken by the state bureaucracy, as e.g. happened in the Soviet Union and in the states of bureaucratic capitalism.

However, in the field of agriculture and agricultural production, where small and medium-sized property now dominates, we cannot talk about forced expropriation and socialization according to the example of the agricultural collectives of the Spanish Revolution of 1936-39, since the expropriation was directed mainly against large landowners.

In Greece there was no collectivist tradition as there was in other countries, such as e.g. in Spain where the peasants influenced by the anarchists and the tradition of the medieval *Comuneros* sought the expropriation of the *tsiflikia* (= fiefdoms) and their collectivization-socialization, or as in Mexico where the indigenous peoples in Chiapas have the tradition of communal lands (*ejidos*) in the territory of the *Zapatistas*. Even in Russia, where there was the tradition of handing over the community to the peasants (*mir*), in the Russian Revolution the estates of large landowners were divided into individual lots before the violent nationalization of the land by Stalin in 1927.

Neither did the Greek workers and peasant movement ever promote a communitarian or collectivist culture. As for industry, due to the left-wing Marxist origins of the workers movement, it was in favor of nationalization and in favor of small property in agriculture.

Historically, even the *tsiflikia* of the Thessalian plain that were expropriated and compensated for in the interwar period, were divided into small lots and the *koligoi* were turned into small-scale farmers.

In Greece there was the tradition of communalism which was a combination of collective and individual property. The community fund, which was supported and financed mainly by the most affluent of the community and everyone contributed to it according to their means, in addition to financing community projects, also functioned as a solidarity fund for those in need. It was the duty of the community to support those who had a poor harvest or had financial needs they could not meet on their own. Community barns were another element of joint ownership and management. The same applies to the common fodder, as mentioned in another section of the text. A collectivist formation was "tselingato" with the free voluntary reunification of nomadic farming families. "Tselingato" functioned as a socio-political unit and not just as a productive one, since it covered all the needs -

economic, social, cultural- of its members. In the Balkans, the institution of the zandrouga (clan) of Slavic origin functioned as a large collective, where everything was common to the large family (often 60 members) that constituted the zandrouga. In the Greek communities, especially those that showed the greatest growth, community crafts were created which could be considered as a form of a collective, since they were created on community resources, with the surplus ending up in the community fund.

In Greece, land collectivization could only be supported on a voluntary basis. Examples from other eras of land requisitions and expropriations of small and medium-sized rural landowners and the nationalization of their land as in the violent "collectivization" of Stalin in 1927 and the forced displacement of people from cities to the countryside, as was done by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, events that have cost the lives of millions of people, are to be condemned and avoided by modern revolutionary movements.

In times of crisis and high unemployment like the one we are going through now, collectivization of large tracts of land that were confiscated due to debts and have been abandoned, owned by the state or banks and left untapped, could work beneficially for the poor of the province, given that the collectivist method and collective work is incomparably more effective than individualized cultivation. Such a prospect would also lay the groundwork for the revival of the Community in socio-political terms. Closer to the modern Greek tradition are the cooperatives and cooperative associations, which also have a long tradition in Greece.

Through such economic and productive organizations (collectives-cooperatives) always in the context of communities and the development of the potential of the earth and people, through the spirit of solidarity and equality, having as a dominant goal, but also a prerequisite for coexistence, survival and self-sufficiency, ecology and respect for nature, Communities and Municipalities can become organizations for the emergence of a new balance at the social, political and economic level, while ensuring dignified human life.

### **Instead of an epilogue**

Immediate abolition of the state, immediate adoption of the management of social affairs by the Municipalities (Communes) and the Communities, socialization with the exception of small and medium agricultural production, confederalism, adoption of direct democracy are goals that can be achieved from the beginning of a genuine and authentic revolutionary process.

In the last years that Greece has been hit by the crisis and especially in the period 2010-2012 when there were large mobilizations against the Loan Facility Agreements, the well-known memoranda, the disintegration of bourgeois "democracy" is something that has become visible not only to large sections of society, but also by regime factors. In fact, bourgeois "democracy" was abolished in

2010 and has no meaning after the implementation of the Loan Facility Agreements under which the legislative and executive powers are no longer issued by the Greek parliament, but by the supranational centers of power, the IMF, the ECB, the European Commission that impose laws and measures on behalf of the country's creditors. Whereas in the past political power in Greece maintained a degree of autonomy, although incomplete, where social groups and classes through the parties exerted pressure on the domestic political power for the benefit of their interests (e.g. middle class, unions, etc.), after 2010 the Greek parliament is simply the belt used to convey to Greek society the mandates of the supranational centers of power based in Brussels, Frankfurt, New York.



*The Italian anarchist fighter Lorenzo Orsetti (Tekoşer Piling) was fighting with the Kurdish YPG militia, at Baghuz, (eastern Syria). He lost his life on Mars 18<sup>th</sup> 2019.*

Bourgeois "democracy" no longer makes sense, nor do elections, and it is of no consequence which party is in power.

The demand for direct democracy, for a different management of social affairs from the existing one, is ripe for many today. However, there has not been and still there is not a political body, a revolutionary movement to set the guidelines.

As history has shown, great social changes, social revolutions presuppose, beyond the appropriate conditions, the elaboration of some basic political positions and directions by the revolutionary movements. Of course, there is always a long way to go from theory to practice. And this is best reflected in the draft "The Confederate View of Libertarian Communism" by Spanish anarchists at the CNT Congress in Zaragoza in May 1936:

"To determine with mathematical precision all that will form the society of the future would be an absurd demand. Many times there is a real abyss between theory and practice. We do not want to fall into the error of politicians who present definitive solutions to all problems, solutions that in practice fail miserably, as they try to impose a method for all cases, without taking into account the very evolution of human life. We, who have a higher view of social problems, will not do that. In designing the regulations of libertarian communism, we will not present a single program that will not be transformable. These transformations will logically arise and they are the same needs and experiences that will determine them."





## ANNEX

### The example of the Aleppo Commune in Syria

A modern example of a commune in a big city is the one in Aleppo, Syria, and it can help us approach in a practical way how such an endeavor is organized and operated in big cities.

Before the start of the civil war in Syria, Aleppo had a population of 2 million. The first people's councils and popular assemblies were established in Kurdish neighborhoods in 2011. A large part of the population and not only Kurds who were 1/4 of the city's population participated in the social project. The model they applied –a combination of councils, committees, communes- worked very effectively and was therefore later adopted throughout Rojava.

In the structures they created, they calculated participation based on households and not individuals. In each neighborhood (one street) numbering 100 to 500 households, communes were created. Per district, which consisted of 30 neighborhoods (streets), they created organizational units called Councils. When these Councils were established, Youth Committees were formed in each district (4 in total). Then the women's councils were formed. They created high level councils at the level of neighborhood, district, canton where the project had been extended. The committees and the Councils were created as a result of the need to resolve specific issues concerning the life of each Commune.

The meetings held by this organizational model took place every month starting on the 20<sup>th</sup>. First were the committees at the lowest level and women and youth committees. On the next day (21st of each month) the general assemblies of the communes were held for the entire population of the neighborhood and on the same day the meetings of the coordinating bodies of the communes followed. On the 22nd the committees met at a district level and on the 23rd the coordinators of the councils in the neighborhoods. Finally, on the 24th and 25th, the people's council of the district convened and on the 26th and 27th the people's council of the Aleppo region convened. The organization and efficiency of the operation of a complex direct democratic model such as that implemented in Aleppo, presupposes the active participation of as many of the entire population as possible in the communes and their procedures. To achieve this required an uninterrupted –at least at the beginning- political work in order to gradually shape the consciousness of the active citizen in everyone. There were activists who participated at all organizational levels, from the root assemblies to the district coordinating councils, who were elected in a direct democratic way.

However, the avoidance of the creation of political professionals was a goal pursued by the pioneers of the project and this would be ensured by the mass

participation and the cultivation of the corresponding education through the procedures of the assemblies themselves. Moreover, the direct democratic model of political and social organization has as a precondition for its success the non-emergence of a caste of political professionals, which undermines its existence and degenerates it by directing it to the sterile and anti-democratic representative system of modern "democratic" systems. The organization of the communes was the basis and foundation of the enterprise and the commune the cell of society. From there stemmed the organization of the solution of all the issues that concerned the neighborhoods, the districts, the city, the region: from the garbage collection to the courts.

The organizational model applied in Aleppo offers us ideas on how to organize society from below in a large city with a population similar to the large Greek cities.

Pola Roupa-Nikos Maziotis  
Members of "Revolutionary Struggle"  
December 2019