

About violence in a time of catastrophes (2023)



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It has been said in recent days that revolutions are not ordered, that they are violent by definition, that decolonization must use terrorism, etc., to justify the indiscriminate murder and kidnapping of the civilian population — which, moreover, are characteristic methods of the death squads of drug trafficking and the States. There are people and groups that confuse this with a defense of the State of Israel or with a sentimental morality typical of the crocodile tears of the Western press. On the contrary, it is a matter of pointing out that the indiscriminate attack on the civilian population is a reproduction of the capitalist form of violence and that nothing emancipatory can grow on the basis of an action that perpetuates the sacrificial violence of the mercantile order. Moreover, Hamas and its like-minded jihadists are a genuine product of the Palestinian genocide perpetrated by the State of Israel, they are functional political-military elements to their perpetuation: as many satraps of capital in the region. That is why Netanyahu — the undisputed leader of the most openly genocidal faction of the Israeli bourgeoisie — supported in

the first instance the establishment of Hamas as a political authority in Gaza. The mass genocide of recent days that exterminates thousands of human beings — mainly women, children and the sick — by bombing, hunger or lack of medical care is the most flagrant proof of the usefulness that Hamas has rendered to the regional policy of the State of Israel. Not only must we recognize the fact that it is Western neo-imperial capital that creates its own terrors — Al-Qaeda should have been enough to affirm this sentence as an indisputable historical maxim — but that terror is functional to the perpetuation of capital and its logic of annihilation.

Hamas violence — a movement financed, supported and armed by the Iranian theocratic and capitalist despotic bourgeoisie that has massacred communists, anarchists, women and the civilian population in general who rose up against their regime of terror — is not violence to liberate the Palestinian people, even if they say that this is their manifest purpose — one should ask what exactly that intended liberation consists of. It is the violence of a jihadist squad that responds as an armed wing to precise geopolitical interests of a neo-imperialist side that faces the old-new Western imperialism within the framework of the systemic crisis of capitalist civilization. It was clear that the attack of October 7 was going to provoke an exacerbated genocidal response by the State of Israel, as it was also clear that the main victims would come from a civilian population that today is hungry and bombarded with white phosphorus to death. Does this mean that the population in Gaza should vegetate quietly waiting for its slow elimination and forced displacement in a *Nakba* [catastrophe] that has been deployed for decades? Of course not, it means that the violence that can emancipate the Palestinian people from a daily regime of Apartheid and genocidal technological terror is radically opposed to the violence of Islamic jihadism. However, this is not an ideal violence that is in the heads of social critics — much less is

to the emergence of widespread uprisings in different areas of the planet-capital against the global neo-imperialist war and the civilizational crisis of capitalism that drags humanity towards ruin and (self)extermination. Palestine may be the Vietnam of our time: a cause of international solidarity that moves people who seek social emancipation from all over the world and, in that way, drags large masses towards the revolt against capital. However, only a radical social criticism that seeks its unity with the real movement can point towards conscious radical emancipation, this implies unambiguously criticizing all the potentialities and reactionary drifts of the social struggles that develop around the world. That theoretical-practical criticism, a moment of self-reflection of the general consciousness of society, is the condition to overcome the limitations and impasses that threaten the struggles of the whole world at a time when the horizon of social and ecological catastrophe is already a daily reality for most human beings.

it a recourse to an ideal morality of what the struggle should be — but it is a real potential that has been presented in all the Intifadas and that has been repressed precisely by Islamic jihad — hence Netanyahu's initial support for Hamas.

In this sense, my position regarding violence in the struggle for our liberation in contemporary times is quite simple: emancipatory violence is one that criticizes in acts the foundations of the framework of capitalist socialization — that is, it is a violence directed towards the abolition of historically particular social relations that sustains the entire building of capitalist civilization. This particular quality of violence currently exists within capitalist civilization as a result of its own contradictory nature, it is a real potential that has been expressed in a series of contemporary global revolts that, through the deployment of their contradictory social praxis, announce the fundamental features of the potential of denial and subversion of capitalist social relations that manifests itself in the social struggles of the S. XXI.

That is why the question of whether or not violence is affirmed is a hoera question, raised in the field of the objectified bourgeois logic. This is the terrain on which the various nationalist, Leninist, jihadist guerrillas, etc. usually move, but it is also the terrain on which their complementary opposite moves: the capitalist state and its armed arms. The real question is: what violence?

In this regard, the criticism in acts of the merchandise, of the basic social forms of capital, is the real nightmare of the ruling classes, because before it conventional armed violence is useless. The revolt of 2019 in Chile, for example, began precisely with the evasion of the payment of the public transport ticket, it was that criticism in acts that allowed the outbreak of the generalized insurrection and against it the State was initially powerless. In fact, the neo-reactionary Alexis López Tapia — who made well-appeared training for the army of Chile and Colombia — titled his booklet *From evasion to insur-*

rection: chronicle of red October, which shows that reactionary sectors can sometimes detect, although in a necessarily distorted and inverted way, the dimension and radically insurrectional potential of a mass movement with greater clarity than the progressive left.

Those who imagine social emancipation as the result of a confrontation between two armies are fully immersed in the capitalist imaginary. They are Leninist and authoritarian in theory and praxis, even if they ignore it or imagine it to be exactly the opposite, since they solve the problem of social emancipation in the same terrain of the known. *What to do?* of Lenin: the injection of consciousness from the outside, the creation of a political and military apparatus of a professional nature, the organization of the armed insurrection with a view to the seizure of power of the State, etc.

On the contrary, the Chilean revolt of 2019 — which had no centralized direction — to sustain its radical moment needed nothing more than stones, sticks and gasoline. In fact, it was the counterinsurgency strategy of the Chilean State that organized the counter-revolt as a confrontation between the masses and the police in delimited and specific geographical species. The objective of this state counterinsurgency operation was to avoid the initial ubiquity of the revolt and suppress its initial radical praxis through its recovery in the confrontation within the State field, that is, in the confrontation between the masses and the police on the basis of physical violence. In this way, the revolt movement thus lost the radical practical dimension that sustained the rupture with the abstract time of capital — that rupture with the time of domination in which we felt that we were making history. This does not mean that we have to renounce the confrontation with the police, but that we have to face it on the ground in the only terrain in which we can obtain a truly emancipatory victory: that is, in the field of the practical questioning of the very foundations of capitalist society. The refusal to pay for the Metro and take it directly en

masse was a truly subversive praxis, because it had the potential — and mass looting prove it — to evolve towards a criticism of the merchandise as such. In other words, refusing to pay for the transport ticket, the movement for evasion opened a historical conjuncture that allowed us to glimpse the material possibility of stopping paying for living — a possibility that, I insist, is given by the very contradictory nature of capitalist society and its intrinsic dynamics.

Taking this perspective into consideration, any critical analysis of the three Palestinian Intifadas should realize that Islamic Jihad is the precise form of repression of any emancipatory potential in the Middle East. Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, Hamas, among other organizations, have been deeply functional to the perpetuation of Western terrorism and the plundering of Arab populations — in fact, these organizations also exploit the population that is under their regimes of economic-military terror. The radical praxis of the intifadas, as widespread uprisings of the Palestinian population against the genocide to which they are subjected on a daily basis, needed nothing more than stones and Molotovs to shake the foundations of the terrorist occupation of the State of Israel and its genocidal policy. Isn't that same population that has been protesting against Hamas for some years, finding repression as a response? But those who are immersed in the despair that this time produces and blinded by the violence of capital are not able to establish distinctions in this regard. In this sense, they are as many personifications of the daily domain of capital and they cannot think of a different quality of violence that breaks with that regime of annihilation by way of the accumulation of abstract wealth, a violence that allows to break with the dynamics of eye for eye that since the twentieth century has shown in a flagrant way to drag the world towards (self)extermination.

However, only a movement of international solidarity and protest can stop the siege and massacre of the population of Gaza, opening the possibility of a historical situation favorable