CENTRE-PERIPHERY RELATIONS: RETHINKING EXPLOITED CLASSES

The conception of **social transformation "by the centre"**, that is, from the **central elements of power** of a society, that is, **of the intellectuals, the rich, the state, the party or the army**, is an **authoritarian conception** that, instead of solving the problems of exploitation and domination, simply **substitutes the oppressors in place**. Whoever uses the centre to change society doesn't end up changing anything but the **tyranny that is placed over society**.

Social transformation must come "from the periphery", that is, **from below, from the exploited classes. These classes are much broader** than the urban industrial proletariat, defined by some anti-capitalists as the "historical subject". Today, the periphery of the world can be considered much more broadly: **indigenous cultures and societies, small producers, skilled workers, peasants, the unemployed, the poor, wage earners, etc.**

> To build social transformation from the periphery is to seek popular organisation outside the centres of power, such as intellectuals, the rich, the state, the party and the army. This means stimulating popular organisation and, in this way, building an alternative for social struggle from the bottom up.

Capitalism, Anti-Capitalism and Popular Organisation

Popular University of Rio de Janeiro,
Movement of Unemployed Workers of Rio de Janeiro

2008

that of the exploited classes who, in the dynamics of the struggle, end up acquiring the taste for freedom and, then, becoming more clearly anti-capitalist.

WHY SPEAK ABOUT POPULAR?

It is called popular because **we are not talking about any organisation**. We are talking about **the organisation of the exploited classes, the organisation of the people who are suffering the consequences of capitalism**. The exploited classes must **organise themselves and co-ordinate the forces of all the dominated and exploited individuals who are victims of capitalism**. Therefore, popular organisation has a **class** character, that is, it seeks to work with a **class perspective**.

> Popular organisation seeks the unity of the exploited classes so that they struggle against the dominant class.

In this struggle **the exploited must appeal to the support of the most combative sectors, with whom they have natural affinities**, without, of course, neglecting **to involve the sectors that suffer the most from the impacts of capitalism as much as possible in their organisation.**

> The popular character of the organisation occurs when a class character is imprinted on it, so that it stimulates and strengthens the class struggle. As we have seen, class struggle is the constant struggle between domination and the will to be free from it. The organisation, therefore, must be

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WHY SPEAK ABOUT ORGANISATION?

Organisation is the co-ordination of forces with a common objective. It makes it possible to **bring together those who defend the same interests** and who, together, can **permanently increase their social force**.

> Organisation multiplies the forces of the exploited; together, they represent not only the sum of individual forces, but a collective force, a social force.

For example, let's suppose you want to protest in front of a city hall because the state's power wants or allows them to demolish the houses of a community. What would the difference be between going one resident at a time and, on the contrary, all going together? **The fact that they are together, organised, would certainly give the residents a lot more strength. Collective force is much greater than the sum of individual forces**.

> The more social force the anti-capitalists have, the more capitalism will be threatened.

A RELATION OF FORCES

Capitalism, in this sense, is a system composed of habits, laws, political and economic institutions, and other symbolic representations. It fact it constitutes a **culture**. Today, this system is able **to seriously limit anti-capitalist struggles**.

It is fundamental that the exploited are able to **counterpose their social force against the force of capitalism**. The moment that this **force of the exploited is bigger than that of capitalism**, such a situation will enable a **real social transformation** based on solidarity and mutual aid; on freedom and equality. However, **for the struggle to achieve the desired objective it is vital to think of a consequent and effective opposition**, that is, to **increase the social force of the exploited**.

> Only with a lot of organisation will it be possible to transform this elementary and potential force into a real social force. For this to happen it is essential to reflect on popular organisation.

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BUT HOW?

To build the struggle against capitalism we will have, necessarily, to **think about organisation. There is a social force in the exploited classes** that we can call elementary or even potential. For this social force to be able to combat capitalism it must:

1. Be organised
2. Be put into practice

It will be useless if this elementary and potential force is not organised and is not put into practice.

> When this social force that is latent (at rest, hidden) in the exploited classes is organised and when it leaves the realm of possibilities and moves into the realm of practice, it becomes a real social force, which is the true possibility we have of combatting capitalism.

**

TO STRUGGLE AGAINST CAPITALISM

As we have seen capitalism is a social regime of domination and exploitation. But if no regime of this kind can be a total regime then it is up to us **to build an alternative to combat it**; a **form of resistance**.

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PART 2: POPULAR ORGANISATION

A TOTAL SYSTEM?

The fact that we are all **immersed** and, to some extent, even **shaped** by capitalism does not mean that there is no way out. **No system of domination and exploitation can be total, because resistance always accompanies any form of domination and exploitation.**

Capitalism has to constantly reinforce its cultural messages and adapt its forms of organisation, precisely because **the oppressed end up resisting and creating new values and ways of life that escape domination all the time.**

PRESENTATION

This booklet, called *Capitalism, Anti-capitalism and Popular Organisation*, is a publication of the Popular University of Rio de Janeiro in conjunction with the Movement of Unemployed Workers of Rio de Janeiro (MTD-RJ).

Formed in mid-2007, the Popular University believes in the political, social and cultural self-education of male and female workers (homeless, landless, unemployed, street vendors, etc.) with a view to building a new society based on socialism and freedom. It is made up of students and workers who assert themselves as the real producers of the wealth of the current society and ,"indignant with the most complete situation of misery and oppression that affects us", has the "deepest desire for the collective construction of a new society, based on co-operation and equality. " [Pro-Popular University Manifesto]

The construction of the Pro-Popular University nucleus made public, through its Manifesto mentioned above, the defence of six points that guided "the construction of this centre of popular learning, knowledge and culture". We can summarise them:

1. The impossibility of the capitalist system promoting the social well-being of the exploited classes, as it is based on exploitation and domination, privileging the dominant class.

2. The impossibility of representative democracy serving the will and expectations of social movements, since it is understood that the representative system and the State itself serve capitalism.

3. The reinforcement of the values of capitalism through today's education, which distances the exploited classes from the possibility of building a new society.

4. The state and private education system, which does not meet the needs of popular education.

5. The defence of democratic, self-managed public education, organised by the excluded sectors themselves, with free access, that values the popular sectors with their social and cultural formation, with a view to their self-emancipation.

6. A popular education that is linked to the historical context of the struggles and conquests of the workers coming from the Paris Commune, passing through the Spanish Revolution, Quilombo dos Palmares, Confederation of Tamoios, armed resistances of Latin America, contemporary popular uprisings, foundation of the University Popular in 1904 and all the struggles of workers who sought their emancipation.

In this sense, we understand that we should contribute with training material to work on the issues presented above, in the training courses that we carry out with groups and organisations/social movements.

MTD is a nationwide movement that is organised around the question of work. In Rio de Janeiro it emerged in 2001, suffering, shortly thereafter, a process of reflux and demobilisation. In 2008, MTD-RJ initiated a process of reorganisation seeking to add old and new militants, which culminated in the formation of several groups of unemployed people in different locations in the city. Currently, MTD-RJ has nuclei being built in the slums of Costa Barros, Vila Cruzeiro and Complexo da Maré.

CONFORMISM AND PASSIVITY

The liberal idea that there is a "natural" order that should not be questioned is reflected in the **conformity, passivity and valuing of obedience** that is characterised, for example, in the **education** we have received since we are children.

To exist, the capitalist system needs to **transmit these kinds of selfish, discriminatory and conformist values** every day. **This is done with education, literature, advertisements and the mass media**. However, this does not mean making a plot to convey a single message.

> The culture of capitalism spreads in an almost always spontaneous and unconscious way, not only because the media belongs to big business, but also because we carry this culture in our own minds. We transmit the culture of capitalism in the words we use, the expectations we generate in our children, in the things we want to consume and in many other ways.

THE CULTURE OF SUCCESS, PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

The fact that a person can only enjoy many rights if they have the economic resources to do so is also reflected in a number of **other norms in our culture**. For example, the culture of **production**, the cult of **"success"** always considered from an **economic point of view**, and the stimulus to **consumerism**.

The **fear of not having the resources** that enable us to have such "success", added to the **possibility of using other people** as instruments for **our own benefit**, is at the root of many **traits of our culture**. For example, **contempt for the poor**; much of the **racial discrimination** and other forms of **discrimination and prejudice** that exist in our society are because of this. It is difficult for people who were raised in a culture of this type **to value other things such as love, friendship, solidarity, companionship, creativity, etc.**

As it matured, MTD-RJ participated in a series of public demonstrations, such as the march for the 40th anniversary of the death of student Edson Luiz, and the action against agribusiness in front of the BNDES, in downtown Rio de Janeiro. In addition, it participated in the First of May, also organised in 2008, which took place in the Canal do Anil community.

With willingness and organisation, MTD-RJ seeks to articulate itself on the needs that all its members have. Constituting itself as an autonomous and combative movement, it aims to make the people achieve what they need for themselves. And a demand from the movement in Rio de Janeiro is also political education.

Therefore, the collaboration between the Popular University and MTD-RJ for this publication could not come at a better time. An important moment for the Popular University for the opportunity to work on political education in a very promising grassroots social movement. It is also important for MTD-RJ for the opportunity to conduct political education with activist, bringing important gains.

In this co-edition, we thought that a first and important step would be material that explained, in a simple way, the functioning of the capitalist system and offered a critical and current perspective in relation to it. At the same time, this material should offer more than just criticism. It should present constructive elements that could show ways and possibilities of how to fight capitalism and, also, give some perspectives of struggle in the medium and long term.

This is what we tried to do with the publication of this booklet. It will serve as support material for the collective of trainers at the Popular University, giving support to political education courses aimed at the base of social movements, among them the MTD-RJ.

The first part of *Capitalism, Anti-capitalism and Popular Organisation* was based, to a large extent, on the book *Anticapital-*

ismo para Principiantes by Ezequiel Adamovsky, published in Argentina. In this part, some excerpts were simply translated and others were modified, or even rewritten by us. In contrast, the second part was completely written by us.

It is absolutely essential for us to highlight the groups and organisations/social movements with which we are in contact and who have contributed significantly to the realisation of this material, either with ideas, or even with contact in daily militancy. They are (in alphabetical order): Popular Assembly (RJ), Association of Autonomous Producers of the City and Countryside (APAC), Antônio Martinez Social Culture Center (CCS-AM), Rio de Janeiro Social Culture Center (CCS- RJ), Conselho Popular (RJ), Floreal Co-operative of Workers in Agroecology, Popular Struggle Front (FLP), Internationalist Front of the Homeless (FIST), Dario Santillan Popular Front (Argentina), Ecological Agriculture Group (GAE), Lutarmada Hip Hop (RJ), Movement of Peasant Women (MMC), Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB), Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST), Movement of Homeless Workers (MTST), National Movement of Fight for Housing (MNLM), Small Farmers Movement (MPA), Food and Germinal Health Center, Recycling Project – Birimbau, SINDISPETRO (RJ), SINDISCOP (RJ), SINDISPREV (RJ), Children of All Earth Tendency (Omo Bogho), Popular University, Us Neguin q No Kala, Via Campesina.

We hope that the reading will be useful!

Popular University
Movement of Unemployed Workers – Metropolitana RJ
Rio de Janeiro, 2008

THE CULTURE OF CAPITALISM: INDIVIDUALISM

> The ruling class can only achieve its hegemony if it can transform its ideology into a general culture, into the "common sense" of the majority of people. Capitalism exists, in part, because it is in our hearts and minds: we all breath its culture every day. The culture of obedience.

The individualism of liberal ideology, translated into everyday culture, manifests itself in this **strong selfishness** that characterises many people today and in the isolation of men and women, each locked in their own affairs.

A lot of the **violence** and **fear** that characterises our societies **comes from this selfishness**, this **urge to be more than others or to be above others**. We are afraid of each other because we assume that others can do us harm in order to benefit themselves. A culture like this **hampers the development of relations of solidarity and compassion and care for others**.

ever they want. And what does freedom of the press mean when **a few people control the large media networks?**

INTRODUCTION

The workers face two enemies.

One of these enemies is quite evident. It is the bosses, business owners and administrators, the heads of public inspectors, the police and security guards who beat, arrest or kill those who rebel. There are no mistakes here. All these people take a stand against struggles, they themselves are hostile to the workers.

The other enemy, however, is concealed. It is those workers who take advantage of struggles to distance themselves from their colleagues and gain some power over their former colleagues, who resort to all pretexts to remain indefinitely in the positions for which they were elected, who will negotiate with the company's management and don't take account of what was decided. Progressively, they stop being workers and become bureaucrats.

The process is always the same. They start by wanting it to be them, and only them, to direct struggles, to decide what to do and when to do it. Then, for example, if a company is occupied they are the ones in front of the offices, , as if by chance, never on the factory floor. If they have shown courage and tactical sense and have gained popularity among colleagues, they join the leadership of a union or run as councillors and permanently leave the working class. While union leaders control institutions that are often very wealthy, whose pension funds mobilise large sums. As city councillors or state deputies, they tend to perpetuate themselves in the state apparatus and their interests are identified with those of other politicians. And so, little by little, an authoritarian vanguard becomes a bureau-

cracy born among workers, this bureaucracy becomes an elite, and then this elite will feed the dominant classes with new members. The political life of Brazil in the last twenty years is a good example of this evolution, and the election of Lula to the presidency consecrated the last step of the process.

The history of the defeats of revolutions is very important to identify each one of these enemies and the danger they represent.

In some cases the workers were defeated by the overt enemy. This was the case with the military coups, when the generals or colonels mobilised against a grassroots government or against a situation in which the working class was acquiring dominance.

But in other cases, revolutionary processes were defeated from within. Then, when the workers managed to expel the bosses and the administrators and took ownership of the companies, when they managed to neutralise the army and arm themselves, they found that at the head of the companies were former colleagues of theirs who acted exactly as administrators and that the new army was commanded by former workers who perfectly imitated the generals. The vanguards had become elites and the elites were transformed into new ruling classes.

To struggle is like everything in life – you learn. And defeats are very important, because it is from them that we can learn the lessons.

If the workers do not want the apparent victories to escape their hands and become real defeats, if they do not want to expel the old bosses just to hand over the economy and the state to new bosses, they must learn to fight both enemies at the same time. And it is more difficult to fight against the hidden enemy than against the obvious enemy. When we confront the owners of the companies, they are already the owners of the companies, the managers and the high officials are already the owners and the police and the security guards too. But the hid-

THE IDEOLOGY OF CAPITALISM

Capitalism is based on its **own ideology**, that is, on a **more or less organised set of ideas**. But an ideology is not only that. It is also a form of false consciousness, a vision that subtly and unassumingly conveys **the message that society can only be organised in the way of the ruling class. Liberalism is the ideology of the bourgeoisie.**

Liberalism holds that society is made up of individuals and that they have certain natural rights. The rights of individuals have priority over the sovereignty of the people: no decision by society can go against them. On the other hand, society and the state should participate as little as possible and leave things to work without bothering the individuals. The state should only intervene when a law is violated, or to offer some minimum basic services. But **what makes liberalism an ideology is not what is said, but what is not said.**

In theory, all human beings should enjoy their natural rights. But they don't say that some of these **rights are distributed unequally**.

In theory, a person may have the right to own a piece of land, but if all the land is already owned by another person this right does not mean anything. If someone is about to die of hunger because others have appropriated all the food no law protects their right to life.

In liberalism the right to freedom means doing whatever you want without anyone putting any obstacles in your way. But **not everyone has the same opportunity to do what-**

THE HEGEMONY OF THE DOMINANT CLASS

However, the problem is not only the lack of real democracy. **The ruling class does not dominate only by deceiving and repressing us**. Its greatest power is the **transformation of its own ideology into the culture and "common sense" that we breathe every day**.

> This happens when the ideas, values and aspirations of the ruling class end up being the ideas, values and aspirations of the exploited. It is when we think and act as if we were the ruling class. This happens a lot. The ruling class has its hegemony when it manages to win the hearts and minds of the oppressed, when it manages to penetrate our most unconscious habits and our bodies. Nevertheless, there is always room to build resistance to this hegemonic model.

den enemy is one born through our carelessness. Combative workers do not become bureaucrats and new bosses because they are evil and perverse people. They may even be full of the best intentions, but if the working mass, if the base of the struggles does not remain active and vigilant, then the comrades who are in charge of the struggles get disconnected and begin to defend their own interests.

In order that the struggle against the old bosses does not represent a creation of new bosses, one thing is indispensable – that workers never give up control over the struggle. Let the decisions be as collective as possible, so that each one can enjoy the experience of others and learn from it. If we don't learn to organise the economy and society, others will take advantage of our ignorance. When electing a comrade for any position, it is necessary that the performance of this comrade is followed and supervised and accountability is required. And it is convenient that elected representatives never stay in office for long, so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire management experience and to prevent the formation of a new elite.

Society's self-management is prepared for by the self-management of struggles. If we are unable to maintain control over how our struggle is organised from the start, we can be sure that we are creating new bureaucrats, which will rejuvenate and strengthen the ruling classes. If we blindly hand over the driving of our demands to those who present themselves today as professionals in the struggles, tomorrow they will be professionals in the administration of the economy and the organisation of the State. The way we organise ourselves is an image of the society we fight for. If we never forget this, we will be able to fight both enemies, the obvious and the hidden, at the same time.

João Bernardo

PART 1: CAPITALISM AND ANTI-CAPITALISM

A DICTATORSHIP OF CAPITAL

Besides this, even in the limited set of questions where our representatives have decision-making power, **democracy is very limited**.

> The powerful have many ways of shaping political decisions with legal mechanisms, such as donations to electoral campaigns and control of the media, or illegal mechanisms, such as bribery.

In fact, history shows that **democracy and political freedoms end whenever a representative or a political movement intends to go against the interests of the ruling class**. So it was with the deposition of governments that proposed some change in Latin America, when they were deposed and the military, along with the Americans and the ruling class, supported military coups that condemned the people to the years of bloody dictatorships that followed.

> For these reasons, we cannot say that we live in a true democracy; in fact, we live in a dictatorship of capital, which allows us to elect some representatives and decide on some minor issues.

For example: if a pharmaceutical company registers a new drug that can save millions of lives and decides to charge an abusive price for it, with an exorbitant profit, setting a price that the poor cannot afford, this is a private matter and **the State cannot intervene**.

WHAT IS CAPITALISM?

Firstly, capitalism is a **social regime**, or a **form of organising social life**. In order for people to live together society as a whole must have "answers" to a series of "questions".

These "questions" can be answered in various ways; **a social regime is the system of "answers" that organise a society**. Throughout history, human beings have organised their lives in many different ways. Capitalism is just one of these historic forms, and it is very recent: it started developing just 500 years ago.

> Capitalism is a social regime, a way of organising social life that started less than 500 years ago.

A SOCIETY THAT DOMINATES AND EXPLOITS

Throughout history many more or less **egalitarian** societies have existed. **But capitalism is a social regime that dominates**. A regime dominates or is dominating when **there is a group of people who dominate over the rest, in a more or less permanent way**. To dominate means to **be able to obtain the obedience of other people; forcing them to do something or other** even if it causes them suffering or discrimination. The dominated may obey the dominator through **force**, although they generally do so because the **culture** they were educated in taught them that this is right, or that this is the only way of living. This "culture of obedience" makes us believe, for example, that the domination imposed by capitalism is necessary and even normal. **We learn this culture of obedience in schools, watching television and even from our parents**.

There are various types of domination, according to the different relations between people. For example: there is **gender domination when men dominate women**, making women work for them, get lower wages than men or behave the way men want them to. This form of domination is called patriarchy, which is expressed in our society mainly by machismo, or in the belief that men are superior to women. Patriarchy existed in most social regimes of the past and it still exists today.

IT IS NOT GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE

In no way is the democracy of today government by the people. When we elect politicians to be our representatives we are **giving them our right to do politics and to govern ourselves.**

Giving politicians this right of ours means that **they will make the decisions** they think are best for **the things that concern us**. Just look: **during election times they make a lot of promises**, but **when they are elected they only defend their own interests and never again show up to do what they promised us.**

> Government for the people by the people is done from the bottom up, in social movements, in popular struggles and not by giving our right to do politics to a professional politician that, when they "get there", will only defend their own interests and forget about we who elected them.

Besides this, the politicians' decision-making power is limited to the national territory and the issues defined as "public". Fundamental aspects that affect our lives, like the **international movement of capital**, for example, **can not be managed by politicians**. Such a democracy as functions today **does not reach the global level**. It also does not reach all that the constitutions of countries – inspired by liberal ideology – define as private matters.

FALSE DEMOCRACY

In reality, **we live in a false democracy**. In the 19th century, when our ancestors began to struggle for democracy, they referred to it in its original sense: **government by the people**. At this time, the liberal elites strongly opposed the idea of democracy; liberalism has always been an enemy of democracy.

However, **after decades of struggle the elite was forced to gradually concede the right to vote to everyone, regardless of their social class. The liberals then adopted the word democracy** as if it was their word, but **profoundly changing its original meaning.**

> It no longer meant "government by the people", but only referred to an electoral system for selecting people who would occupy some state positions. Nothing else.

Other forms of domination can be established when, for example, **whites dominate blacks, christians dominate muslims, one country dominates another**, and they do this simply because they believe they are superior.

The main domination of capitalism is economic; when **a minority of rich people dominate the poor majority**.

> When there is domination, there is exploitation. Whoever dominates is the exploiter, those that are dominated are the exploited. Therefore, besides dominating people capitalism also exploits them.

A SOCIETY OF CLASSES

As we have seen capitalism is a system that dominates and exploits economically, and for this reason we can say that it is a **class system**. This means that there is one class of people – **the dominant class** – that **has the right to dominate the rest** because of its place in society and because of its functions and attributions.

Class domination can justify and organise itself by means of various institutions, norms, habits and ideas. It was not an invention of capitalism. In the Middle Ages, for example, there were kings, nobles, priests and peasants. At that time, the kings declared that they were chosen by god, and therefore needed to be treated with privileges; the nobles, or feudal lords, were nothing more than inheritors of great properties of land, which they used to obtain resources by imposing taxes; and the peasants, the only workers from that society, had a large part of their agricultural production taken by force by kings and nobles, in the way that they were dominated, by force and by a culture of obedience, primarily taught by the priests.

In India it was thought that certain people were descendants of very important gods, and because of this formed a superior **caste**. The inferior castes have to serve the superior caste.

In the Soviet Union, the political chiefs and functionaries maintained that they had the **knowledge** and **authority** to command society, and for this reason had to occupy a place of privilege.

BUT WHY DON'T WE CHANGE ALL THIS?

Capitalism is an unjust form of social organisation that causes enormous suffering for the large majority of people: it produces poverty and exploitation, subjects human beings to passivity and limits their potential, it stimulates many forms of discrimination, breeds violence and fear, it is an attempt against basic rights and it destroys the planet. Anti-capitalists have been saying this for many years. So why don't we change all this?

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

The second separation that the state makes is between the **private and the "public"**. The constitutional and legal system establishes that there is an entire region of social life that society itself can not "touch" because it is **private**. No one – not even the state – has the possibility to legislate on what are considered an individual's private rights. In principle, there is no problem with this. The problem is that, **under capitalism, only certain types of rights have this privilege to be defined as private (or even to be considered rights).**

The line that separates a **right** from a mere **demand**, or what is **public** and what is **private**, is not fixed, and has been changed throughout history. For centuries, men and women have struggled to bring private privileges back to the public sphere, so that society can decide democratically whether to preserve them or not.

> It is important to make a distinction between what is public and what is state-owned. People usually call a company public when it belongs to the state. However, a company is only public when it belongs to everyone who works there. A space is public when it belongs to the community. Universities would be public if all of the professors, students and staff managed them on their own and not like today, where they answer to a "boss-state."

In all these cases, the society developed a whole system of institutions, norms and beliefs to organise, legitimate and protect the power of the **dominant class**. But the power of the dominant class in capitalism has a different form.

> Capitalist society is the first in which the power of the dominant class is not determined by birth or by belonging to some closed circle, but fundamentally (even though not only) by economic differences between people.

THE DOMINANT CLASS (OR BOURGEOISIE)

The **dominant class** in capitalism is the **bourgeoisie**, which is defined by the quantity and type of **economic resources** it controls.

The bourgeoisie appropriates the means of production by means of **ownership of the land, of the companies, the machines, of money, the banks, of access to knowledge** etc.

But sometimes it can also **control** economic resources without needing to be the owner. For example, when the shares of a company are divided into thousands of small owners but just **one group of big businesses controls the administration**. This class, of those in control, can be called the **"managerial class"** or "co-ordinating class".

To ensure its control of economic recourses the **bourgeoisie also needs to control other resources:** thus, they get into certain political offices, finance politicians' campaigns worth millions, sponsor scientific and technological development, get academic and judicial posts, control the media, among other things.

> The dominant class is defined, therefore, as the group that directly or indirectly controls the fundamental economic and non-economic resources of a society. By means of this control it obtains domination over the rest. This domination occurs when the dominant class makes us do what they

GLOBAL SOCIETY, LIMITED RIGHTS

The nationalist ideology typical of capitalism makes us think that the space of society coincides perfectly with that of a state or country. However, if **society if the set of relations that we establish between ourselves and with nature**, it is clear that **these relations do not end at the borders of the country in which we live.**

Although we have not realised it, **we are all interconnected** in a positive or negative way. The functioning of production, commerce, the circulation of ideas, fashion and culture all connect people in the global space.

There is no such thing as a "French society" or a "Peruvian society", as though they were separate and independent entities. The **society we live in is global and interdependent**.

> States fragment, separate and divide global society, creating privileged human groups and geographic zones, and others that are oppressed. One of the functions of states is to limit our rights within boarders, so that we can not change the functioning of (global) society as a whole.

A MACHINE TO SEPARATE AND HIERARCHISE

The state is also a **machine for separating people and hierarchising the rights that they have**. First, it separates human beings into lots of different political sovereignties, or, into countries that are under different states, separated by borders. The citizens only have political rights inside their own states and they loose them if they cross the border.

The human beings that a state defines as **foreigners** often do not even have the freedom to move freely throughout the territory.

> want, or what is better for them, and not what the people want, or what is better for the people.

One characteristic of capitalism is that classes are not separated in a permanent and absolute way. There are not just two levels: the extremely poor and the extremely rich. Classes are divided into different and continuous levels of wealth that go from the extremely poor up to the extremely rich, passing through various levels in between. There is not much difference between one level and the next, but **the distance between the rich and the poor is enormous**, which produces a society of **immense social inequality**.

THE EXPLOITED CLASSES

Often, anti-capitalists discuss these questions fervently as they assume that everyone acts politically according to the class that they belong to. But then what about the fact that some **teachers and workers from the middle class, or even people that came from the upper classes, were great revolutionaries; while some workers or poor people were big conservatives, reactionaries and allies of capitalism?**

Identifying which class a person belongs to and with which class they ally is valid, but only until a certain point. In reality, outside the dominant class, defining social classes can be a deceptive thing if they are thought of as fixed and non-modifiable classes.

Capitalism is not a static system characterised only by class divisions, but a constant and daily process of separating people into different classes.

There are people who say that classes do not exist. They say that class division in the nineteenth century was clearer: bourgeois (those who owned the means of production) and the proletariat (the exploited workers). As the situation has changed a lot today and this definition can not cover all the layers of our society (all those we saw above), they say that class society does not exist. Or even that **the concept of class is outdated. Could it be?**

Just look at what we see around us: **regardless of the fact that classes have become more complex and their division more difficult, we can not deny that there are those who like capitalism (the ruling class) and others who are**

THE STATE AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

As much as we know that the state and society are not the same thing, today's capitalist society relies on the state in order to survive and there is mutual influence between the state and society. **Changes in society sometimes translate into changes in the state, and changes in the state usually translate into changes in society.** And just as the **class struggle is permanently shaping** every corner of society, it also does so with the **state**. For example, when the state ensured the eight-hour working day, this was not only a change coming from the state, but also a change in the society that, mobilised, brought about this conquest in relation to the state.

The **law of the eight-hour** working day – which undoubtedly hurt the short-term interests of the businessmen – reflected the greater **strength that the workers had in order to force the dominant class to accept their demand**. The state had to make this law to ensure the **legitimacy of the system**, which was in danger because of the strengthening of the anti-capitalist struggles of the time. These struggles were very strong in Brazil in the early twentieth century.

> The class struggle can change important aspects of the form of the state and its functions, in the same way it can do this with other aspects of society such as, for example, with a company, when the workers struggle for better wages or for a shorter working day.

TO ENSURE LEGITIMACY

Since capitalism is permanently threatened by the class struggle the state also has the role of making **capitalist society appear legitimate**. If the majority of people had the opinion that the whole system is illegitimate, then they would overthrow capitalism easily. **When legitimacy fails, the state is also responsible for repression. But no system survives very long if it is based solely on repression: the state must always ensure the legitimacy of capitalist society.**

> For this reason, the state must maintain an appearance of neutrality at all costs. Even though it is capitalist from beginning to end, the state needs to appear independent, autonomous from any pressure from the powerful. That is why, on many occasions, the state even creates laws that may harm the short-term interests of the powerful. It is this appearance of neutrality that confuses many who try understand how the state works.

suffering the consequences (the exploited classes). Some thinkers, as a reinforcement of new forms of struggle, claim that today the exploited worker, previously called proletarian, is in reality those who live in rebellion against the capitalist system. Many even with no place in the traditional productive sphere. Regardless of the class division that we use, it is possible to observe this great difference between the classes.

> The exploited classes are defined as the group that is dominated by the dominant class. As the exploited classes don't own or control the fundamental (economic and non-economic) resources of society, they end up being exploited by the dominant class. Regardless of how these exploited classes are divided, this doesn't matter to us: the fact is that there are a few that exploit and many that are exploited.

CLASS STRUGGLE: THE CRISIS INHERENT TO CAPITALISM

As a class society capitalism carries a permanent tension in its heart: **the class struggle**. As domination and exploitation are present in every corner of society, so too is resistance.

Capitalism is implied **not only in economic exploitation**, but also in **taking away from people their ability to do things, their freedom of movement, their ability to decide autonomously how they want to live**. For this very reason, capitalism faces **constant resistance; a struggle in which the oppressed seek to escape domination and exploitation and regain the ability to do things, freedom of movement, the possibility of decision-making.**

> The class struggle is this constant fight between domination and the will to free oneself from it. It can be more or less conscious, more or less politicised, more or less visible, but it is always there.

Class struggle is present when a worker goes on strike, but also when they leave their job in search of a less exploiting boss. It is present in a great revolt, but also when someone works slowly – due to not having managed to organise themselves with other exploited workers – even to the point of boredom. It is present in conscious and collective actions – for example, in a demonstration of unemployed workers or of homeless or

TO GUARANTEE ACCUMULATION

The role of the state has to do with at least two aspects: guaranteeing **long term economic accumulation** and ensuring the **legitimacy of the system**. Without the state, individual capitalists could not ensure the continuation of their accumulation of profit. For example: without state regulation businesspeople in the fishing industry would fish until they had finished all the fish.

However, this way of thinking of businesspeople would end up making all businesses run out. For this reason, the **regulation of the economy** is an essential function that the capitalist state performs to **guarantee long-term accumulation**. It may seem like the state harms the individual fishing businessperson when it imposes limits, but in reality it is benefitting the class to which it belongs.

of history, this second part proved to be the most correct. An example of this was the Soviet Union, when a "socialist" system with a state showed itself equally, or more oppressive than, the capitalist system itself.

landless workers – but also in individual and unconscious actions – like a youth who looks for a type of career that won't put them in the condition of a wage worker or in a poor resident who, out of necessity, pulls an "izinyoka" to use electricity without paying for it.

> The class struggle forces capitalism to permanently develop new forms of dominating, of exploiting and of dividing people. But people always find a way of join together again, to escape the domination and exploitation, of winning spaces of freedom.

For this reason **the power of the dominant class can only be unstable and fragile**, and needs to **reformulate itself every day**. Capitalism is a system that lives permanently in **crisis** because the crisis is inherent to it, besides manifesting itself continuously. Even if there are technical explanations, **the cause of these economic crises that the system suffers is us, our ability to escape, to resist and to rebel against the capitalist system.**

PRIVATE PROPERTY

In capitalism the dominant class builds its power by means of a series of beliefs and institutions that constantly have to change, adapt, or be eliminated by the class struggle. But there are some that are relatively stable. One of the most important is the idea that some resources that exist in the world can be **private property.**

Private property is also a human invention, that is, it wasn't "born" with us. In the past, besides the property of the kings and feudal lords there were large areas of common use. In them, the peasants used the land together, dividing the result of the collective work.

> Private property is nothing more than the right of exclusive use that a person has over any type of resource.

There are resources that still haven't been privatised, such as the atmosphere. Fortunately, it is still not necessary to pay anyone for the air that we breathe. But capitalists also enjoy this situation and, because of this, they don't worry about air pollution and, for example, keep very pollutive industries operational.

Private property **produces perverse effects on society**. What happens with the children of the exploited classes who are born into a world where they find practically everything closed? Where will they go? What will they do?

> The property of something is private when someone robbed or deprived others of the possibility of

AND THE STATE?

One of the most difficult questions to understand about capitalism is what the state is and how it functions. **The state is not neutral, but is on the side of the dominant class.**

Before the twentieth century, the **state was only repression**. The laws that it developed and defended, serving to **maintain the privileges of the dominant classes**, were guaranteed by an **"iron fist"**.

The **class struggle** that shook the nineteenths and twentieth centuries **contributed to the emergence of a new form of state**, which is characterised by the **implementation of "social welfare"** policies that serve as a measure to **contain the fury of the exploited classes.**

Thereafter, it was found that the state could make important **laws for the benefit of workers**, including laws that apparently prejudiced the powerful. An intense **debate** began between the capitalists that continues today. To what extent does the state depend on the dominant class? Does the state have any degree of autonomy?

> A part of the anti-capitalists were confused when dealing with the question of the state. This part thought that the state could be a means for the emancipation of the workers (to be reached either by elections or by revolution). Another part of the anti-capitalists claimed that the state is an integral part of class society and should therefore be destroyed, together with capitalism, so that the workers can be emancipated. With the passing

into private property. Farmers that reject genetically modified seeds are often surprised with their crops being contaminated by the plants of their neighbours, large landowners that use "transgenic" seeds.

And the oceans, humanity's last spaces of common use, are being increasingly privatised. How many beaches are not already for the exclusive use of big tourism companies? Fish, once free in the oceans, have now become the private property of "marine farmers", the fishing companies.

Capitalism also increasingly penetrates our minds and our social life, in the way that we work with increasing intensity and for less remuneration, and can only use our time in a way that makes a profit, because even in our "free time" we often take improvement courses, study things that we don't like or that don't interest us etc. to increase our technical knowledge and, consequently, our productivity, for the benefit of the bosses.

> Expansion – external or internal – is essential for capitalism to survive its permanent internal crisis.

> utilising it. For example: when a property owner has a lot of empty houses or land and deprives us of the right to live there. The fact that these houses or land are private property, even if the owners don't use them, gives them the right to deprive us of the right to live there, that is; they rob us of the right to live there.

Private property is not a new thing: since time immemorial exclusive rights already existed over some goods: a piece of land, the tools for working, etc. In capitalism this kind of right has extended to cover almost everything. Thousands of hectares of land and several lakes can now be private property, just like ports, businesses, music, ideas, genes, or millions of dollars in a bank. It also allows some people to take ownership, without paying anything, of the few things that are not private. For example: a company may contaminate everyone's air and occupy our visual space with advertisements. Capitalism is a privatising machine.

COMMODITY, SALARY AND MARKET

Another key institution of capitalism is **commodity. A commodity is anything that is produced to sell and to make a profit.** There has also always been the buying and selling of objects in spaces that were called markets. However, in capitalism **all space tends to turn into a big market and almost everything becomes a saleable commodity.** Not just a fish or a pan, but also health, education, information and security. To have access to what is privatised it is increasingly necessary to pay, or make a purchase. This includes people's time, which is also turned into a commodity.

The history of the transformation of time into a commodity may well be told by the evolution of the watch, a machine born seemingly innocent and useful. In the eighteenth century, when capitalism was gearing up for its great rush to the Industrial Revolution, the clock appeared with just the hour hand. In the following century, it was time for the appearance of the minute hand. This in order to better split time into fractions and steal them from workers even more efficiently. The days of up to 16 hours in the factories now had a precision ally. It was no longer day or night that dictated the rhythm of work. Time was no longer the natural, that of the seasons of the year, of longer or shorter nights or temperature variations. Workers had to obey the tyrannical beat of the watches, almost always regulated by the boss's time. Even before the end of the nineteenth century, in order to satisfy the speed of industrial production, the second hand was then invented.

INTERNAL EXPANSION

But **capitalism** didn't only expand abroad. It also **expanded towards the interior of regions that are already capitalist**, further intensifying its presence. Rivers and lakes, squares and parks, schools and universities, theatres and spectacles are increasingly turning into **commodities**, invaded by the presence of **publicity** in every corner, and by dependency on **sponsorship**.

There are increasingly less attractive and safe public spaces, which is why people are forced to opt for **private spaces** that **are already commodities**. Something as simple as a walk through the square or main street of a neighbourhood tends to be replaced today by a visit to a shopping centre.

Through the invention of intellectual property capitalism transformed knowledge, which is an advance made by the collaboration of humanity, into a commodity.

For example: long before current toothpastes, the indigenous people that inhabited what is now Brazil used "joá", which is a Brazilian tree, as a way to reduce problems with cavities in their teeth. The dominant class stole this knowledge from the people and turned it into a commodity that only they could produce and sell. The propaganda "teaches" that it is only with toothpaste that you can prevent cavities; bit by bit conditioning everyone to buy this commodity.

The same thing happens with maize and soya seeds; natural foods that are being modified by genetic engineering. That is, once again the dominant class uses technology against the exploited classes, turning something that belongs to everyone

ple. A Mexican worker can be exploited by US companies, but he can't leave Mexico and enter the United States. This is another reflection of capitalism that favours money instead of people.

> Today an employer can buy labour time to use it for their own benefit in exchange for a wage. The difference between what the worker produces and what they receive as a wage is what is called surplus value. In capitalism the dominant class appropriates the surplus value that the workers and society produce.

In pre-capitalist societies the dominant class was content with demanding a **tax or tribute** from the population, without also wanting to control their time. In capitalism the dominant class doesn't "demand" that anyone pay tribute or work for it.

This "obligation" is indirect. **The people that were robbed of their resources have no choice but to hand over labour time "voluntarily" to the dominant class to get payment so they don't die of hunger. This obligation that seems voluntary is called economic coercion.**

> So, capitalism can be defined as a series of habits, laws and political and economic institutions, and a whole culture, that guarantee and legitimate the fact that some people can deprive the rest of access to almost all kinds of resources, and that they can use others for their own enrichment. Taking over the work of others, the dominant class produces commodities to quickly sell on the market. Thus, it has a profit that allows it to accumulate ever greater wealth, in order to maintain and increase its power with it.

"PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION"

Before capitalism, the large majority of men and women had their own means of production – **land, animals, work implements** – or divided them collectively with their neighbours. In this time, no one would have accepted selling their labour time to another person just to survive: there still wasn't a need for this yet.

In this time, neither time nor work were considered commodities.

> Therefore, the establishment of capitalism needed a long process of the expropriation of the means of production from the hands of the direct producers, of the riches and of the resources of entire peoples, and of the ability of the people to live in accordance with their own decisions and their own customs.

This process of expropriation is what is called **primitive accumulation**. In historical terms it meant, among other things, the **expulsion of thousands of peasants** from their lands in Europe and in other areas in order to force them to become city workers.

It also meant the colonial plunder of the riches of the whole world over centuries, the **imposition of bloody colonial governments**, the **destruction of entire ethnic groups** that refused to be forced into submission, etc.

ECONOMIC GLOBALISATION

The third stage of capitalism's expansion is the current one, which some call **globalisation. Economic globalisation** means a **much greater degree of integration of production, distribution and exchange on a global scale**. Each part of the same product is produced in different places in the world, products are imported and exported. The companies themselves organise in a transnational way.

In this phase, imperialism and nations have already completed a good part of their mission and **new institutions have emerged to further capitalist expansion. Investments and transnational companies need to move freely** without being affected by any national borders, and for this it is necessary to standardise certain rules of economic functioning around the world, and with them certain cultural issues of all nations.

Nation states can no longer fulfil all of these tasks and, on the contrary, **are losing their power**. To complement them **private and (supposedly) public transnational institutions that regulate and organise life on a global scale** have emerged. Some examples of these institutions are: the United Nations (EU), the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

> In economic globalisation capital has free flow between countries, which does not happen with peo-

There are those who believe that primitive accumulation was just an opening period of capitalism, a sort of "kick-off". Others believe that, in fact, capitalism is a great and constant process of primitive accumulation that will only end when the system itself ends. In any case, it is clear that capitalism is a system founded on violence.

IMPERIALISM

A **second cycle of expansion** was towards the **"discovered" territories**, starting in the fifteenth century. Through **imperialism** and **colonialism** the **new capitalist nations each appropriated enormous regions and forced their inhabitants to work for them.**

Motivated by the desire for profit **the capitalists plundered gold and silver from America, enslaved millions of Africans, exploited Chinese workers, expropriated Indian peasants and many other similar absurdities for 500 years**. Commercial companies, together with the nation states, were the main institutions that led this expansion.

Imperialism also produced the **standardisation of the world**. For example, the colonisers wanted to **impose their customs on the colonised peoples** because they wanted to make them similar; **they imposed European languages and cultures** on the colonised. However, there was also a division of people again according to criteria of **nationality, religion or skin colour**. All the non-whites were considered "inferior" and able to be exploited and enslaved. **The stage of imperialism was also marked by war and state violence, and enormous suffering for most of humanity.**

A GLOBAL AND EXPANSIVE SYSTEM

Although it had started to arise in Europe just five centuries ago, **capitalism soon came to influence the whole planet; its expansive logic doesn't seem to have limits.**

The possibility of expansion is fundamental for capitalism; it's its way of resolving its inherent crisis. **Without expansion it would simply collapse.**

NATION STATES

Throughout history capitalism expanded, creating institutions and social forms that didn't exist before. Among its first creations are **borders and nation states**.

The notion that a **political authority should coincide perfectly with a clearly defined geographic space and with borders** is an invention of capitalism; this notion didn't exist before.

In Europe, before capitalism, there were only a few cities and, between them, vast feudal territories. These cities did not belong, as happens today, to countries and in each one of them you would find a people with their habits and customs. **Borders and states where then invented by the dominant class**, which was interested in paying less taxes and profiting more with the sale of their goods.

The idea that **the spaces occupied by a state should coincide with a nation**, or, with a group of inhabitants or with a more or less homogenous culture and identity is also new.

Thus, **capitalism imposes a language, unique and uniform laws and customs on inhabitants of large spaces that previously lived with different ways and cultures. The ideology of nationalism is part of this process.** A few centuries ago, national identity didn't exist.

The construction of nations also separated the inhabitants of distinct "national" spaces. By crossing one of the new borders people became foreigners and lost a lot of their rights. **This whole work of standardisation and, at the same time, the division of people took centuries of wars and state violence.**

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Capitalism, Anti-Capitalism and Popular Organisation
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TO STRUGGLE AGAINST DOMINATION

Popular organisation is anti-capitalist and struggles against the domination of the exploited classes. This domination, as we have seen, is most evident in the economic sphere, but it is not limited to it.

To say that **"social transformation must come from the periphery"** means that **the class struggle, translated into popular organisation, can take many different forms**. It may be an organisation of indigenous people fighting against the destruction of their traditional values; or of native peoples of a country who struggle against the exploitation of a state/government (either theirs or another); peasants fighting for land or small rural workers who struggle to have a place to plant their crops. It may be an organisation of the unemployed who struggle against unemployment; of workers who have been marginalised by the system; or even of salaried workers. Ultimately, **all of these sectors are the periphery of the capitalist system**.

In addition, **popular organisation can incorporate other demands** into its list of demands and struggles: issues of **ecology**, **gender** (relations between men and women), **communication, culture, race, sexual orientation, etc.**

> Popular organisation is a struggle against the domination of capitalism, but can include within it the fight against other forms of domination.

THE WILL TO FIGHT

To build popular organisation the will to fight is fundamental. This is because **popular organisation will not be built spontaneously, "out of the blue"**. Even though we know that many forms of class struggle arise spontaneously, **it is useless to wait for an organised social force against capitalism to arise and to replace it without intention and effort.**

To transform society and end capitalism **a lot of work will be necessary**. The **will to fight**, as an exploited class, is the surest way to **sustain popular organisation as a permanent tool of struggle.**

> If the exploited want to transform society there is no other way: they, the most affected, need to be very willing to fight. Without this will the system will never change; it will continue to get stronger and stronger. On the contrary, if this will is transformed into popular organisation then there will be an important element to dispute the decisive "arm wrestling" against capitalism.

OUR "HOMEWORK"

Build popular organisation!

MASS MOVEMENTS OR SIMPLY "SOCIAL MOVEMENTS"

The best way to build popular organisation is to create and stimulate what some people in the past have called **"mass movements"**. Although many anti-capitalists use this term, the fact is that many (authoritarians) ended up thinking that **the mass movement should be subordinated to the political party.**

> For the authoritarians the mass movement is only an organism that obeys the orders dictated by the party and, often, the people of the party that dictate the rules are far removed from social struggles. Or even, because of "bureaucratisation", they begin to think and act in the opposite direction of the interests of the true agents of transformation, that is, the exploited classes.

Against this position of a subordinated movement, a "rent a crowd" that is not the vocation of free peoples and groups, the most suitable term for the group of workers in the process of organisation or already organised is that of "social movements". We know that many social movements are still mere "masses" working for the benefit of all kinds of people, but we'll talk about that in a moment.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT?

A social movement is a group of people and/or associated entities that have common interests for the defence or promotion of certain objectives in relation to society. These movements can **be in the most different places and defend the most diverse banners of struggle**. Almost always, and this is very clear in the programmes they defend, **social movements are formed on the common basis of necessity**. The country's **economic reality**, especially that of a society with enormous injustices like Brazil or South Africa, serves as a **factor of agglutination**, of **bringing together** individuals belonging to exploited groups.

> This condition of necessity, added to organisation and the will to fight, forms the tripod that supports the formation of social movements.

In Brazil we can identify a lot of social movements in existence today. Let's see.

There are the **landless** movements that struggle against the big landowners and demand a fair distribution of land; the **homeless**, who are struggling for the right to housing and against real estate speculation; **unemployed** workers, who are struggling for decent jobs and new labour relations; and those of the **communities** (favelas/townships), which in addition to the weight of other necessities, suffer daily police violence in the place where they live. There are many others: **community movements**, movements to win free **public transport** and

It is by struggling that one learns to struggle. In day-to-day mobilisation we learn things that no school can teach us. In practice, theory gets much better. So, get to work, let's leave the theory and start the practice!

THE MEANS OF POPULAR ORGANISATION AND THE PEDAGOGY OF STRUGGLE

To conclude the material on popular organisation, there is an important reflection. **All the means by which popular organisation is exercised must be in full agreement with the new society that is urgently needed to be built.**

That is why the **day-to-day struggles**, in addition to bringing about gains, already **highlight the ethical values of the new society that must be built**. The whole process of struggle pointed out here allows us to conclude that it is essential to **use the appropriate means to achieve the desired ends**. In reality, **the ends are in the means. Freedom cannot be achieved by restricting people's participation, nor equality by maintaining certain privileges; everything must already be transformed into the methods used in the struggle.** The struggle itself, as has already been said, is an enormous source of learning, it is what educates the class.

> And this is absolutely important: defending the coherence between means and ends. In the model of popular organisation the entire process of struggle – that is, the means – is consistent with the ends; which are the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of a new society. We can affirm that the means must be absolutely consistent with the ends that are to be achieved.

improve its quality, recyclable **waste pickers'** co-operatives, **indigenous** movements, **student** movements, trade **unions**, movements of **feminists, blacks, gays, popular councils, artistic and cultural** movements, **environmentalists**, etc.

But there is a problem: **not all "social movements" are looking to build popular organisation with the aim of fighting capitalism. Many of these movements support capitalism and its values**. In reality, then, these would be opinion or pressure groups **to obtain reforms within the capitalist system, but that's all**. We can not call them social movements since **social movements, in fact, are anti-capitalist.**

> In all spheres of society the struggle against domination appears, its main form being the class struggle. A social movement gives body to this struggle against domination which, being so broad, causes social movements to have the most different flags of struggle. Since capitalism has different negative effects on the lives of populations, many social movements exist as a way of resisting these effects.

FORCE TO GROW AND FIGHT

Social movements must grow increasingly **stronger**, with more and **more people and more organisation**. In order to obtain this strength it is essential that they are not **"ideologised"**. This means that a social movement should not be anarchist, social-democrat, Marxist, monarchist, etc. **It must not be subordinate to any ideology.**

> All those that want to struggle should be within the social movement, regardless of their ideology.

In a homeless movement there should be as many people who want to struggle for housing as possible. Everyone who wants to struggle for decent work should be in a movement of the unemployed. Everyone who wants to fight against machismo and patriarchy should be in a feminist movement.

One does not make a movement with a narrow and restricted ideological line, for example: a Marxist student movement or anarchist homeless movement, etc. **A social movement is always organised around the issue for which it decided to struggle. Necessity is the great driving force.**

However, this does not mean that **among all the people** who are inside **a social movement** there are not people of the **most different ideologies. This is normal and will always happen**. We can not prohibit people who promote a certain ideology from being in the social movement, nor prohibit them from carrying out propaganda. **What must not happen in**

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

The two **basic values** to be **promoted in the future society are freedom and equality.**

Freedom being the **possibility for all people to develop all their potentialities, abilities, creativity without being dominated or exploited.**

Equality being the **possibility for everyone to choose which path to follow**. Thus, there is no longer this gap between rich and poor and **everyone has more or less the same level**, because they have the **same opportunities**. This does not mean that we will try to standardise everyone, but that in such a system **there is no inequality and there is no hierarchy**. And, since property will be collective, everything will be organised in favour of everyone.

TRUE DEMOCRACY

This society of **self-management and federalism** promotes true democracy, that is, **true government by the people**. In it, it is not the capitalists and politicians who govern, but the organised people themselves.

> In a true democracy, the people govern themselves. They are sovereign, make their own decisions and are neither dominated nor exploited.

This "new democracy" should also guide a whole **new conception of education and culture** that **educates people towards freedom and equality**. In this way, stimulating a culture of solidarity and mutual aid, reinforcing this model of society in opposition to the previous one.

any way, however, is for one of these ideologies to dominate the social movement. A social movement is **dominated** (some say **"captured"**) when it **no longer struggles around its issues**, but only uses these issues to **promote an ideology, a candidate, a party, an NGO, etc.** In this case, **the movement is being used, it is captured.**

AUTONOMY: A SOCIAL MOVEMENT MUST NOT BE CAPTURED

The previous theme reflects on the **autonomy of the social movement**. It is essential for **social movements to be autonomous**. What does that mean?

It means **that social movements must be autonomous in relation to the state, to political parties, to bureaucratised unions, to bureaucrats on duty, to the church**. In short, it means that movements must be **able to make decisions and act on their own accord**. The **autonomy** of the social movement is the **possibility for it to deal with its own affairs, independent of institutions and mechanisms of exploitation and social domination.**

> Social movements should not be transmission belts for individuals, collectives, groups, organisations or parties that want to be in charge of them. People who want to capture a social movement do not want to help it, they want the social movement to help them.

WITHOUT THE STATE AND WITH FEDERALISM

Since **capitalism must have been abolished, the state must no longer exist either**. Instead of national states the future society must be based on the **free association between people**. And this can happen in **any territory**, which is why the **new society is internationalist.**

> In this model there is no longer representative democracy. People meet in councils and make their own decisions. When there is a need for co-ordination, a delegate is chosen who represents the council's positions and agrees with others. All political functions are rotational and recallable (If base of the council desires it the representative can be removed from office at any time.). This is what we call federalism.

Federalism also has a historical memory. During the early years of the **Russian Revolution**, which began in October 1917, the workers and soldiers of the people decided everything in so-called soviets, or councils. These were the highest decision-making bodies. Subsequently, with the bureaucratisation of the revolution and the rigging of the soviets by a political party, this experience lost its original content.

> Everything that is resolved must be an agreement between the collective of workers that, in equality, will decide what to do with everything that concerns their work environment. This is called self-management, and it happens when decisions are taken out of the hands of the ruling class and go to councils of workers who make their own decisions about everything that concerns them.

This is not a dream, it has happened in some moments in the history of the West. In the **Paris Commune**, in 1871, the workers, besides taking over the factories, voted for their representatives according to areas of production. There were no higher wages and everyone had a rotating function; that is, they took on each other's tasks in different periods of the production process. It was also like this for more than 30 months in the **Spanish Revolution**, in 1936-39. A scene of innumerable experiences of self-management which, in certain regions, achieved results far superior to those verified in the previous conservative moulds. And that was during a civil war.

NOT EVERYONE WANTS TO CAPTURE

It is essential that those who make up a social movement know how to **distinguish between those who approach the movement with the aim of capturing it and those who approach it with the objective of taking part in the specific tasks, decided in the deliberative forums**. There is a big difference between these and the social movement must be **very attentive**, because **people that want to help should always be welcomed. They will be able to contribute to the growth of the struggle, the social movement and popular organisation itself.**

But how to **differentiate** between a **person who wants to help the social movement** from another who wants **to capture it?** It's **relatively simple**, as we'll see next.

STATES, PARTIES, BUREAUCRATS, ETC.

Whoever wants to capture it does not aim to support the social movement, but rather to be a boss, to command the movement, to make the movement serve their own ends. Such individuals adopt the principle that "you serve others better when you are serving yourself".

A **social movement should not be linked to a government politician** or even to any **sector of the state. Secretaries, deputies, councillors**, the great majority of times, **get close to movements because they want support from them.** Support to **sustain their policies**, support to **get more votes**, support to have what they call a **"social base"**. The objective **of the state, of the government,** is always to make what we call a **"social pact"**; they want to **placate the social movement**, to make it fit into their system – of representative democracy.

Political parties also seek to **capture** social movements. Firstly, there are **those who are inside the system of representative "democracy"** (those who contest elections) and who **seek in the social movement only a source of votes.** It is very common for these politicians to approach social movements during election times, make promises, and then disappear. But there are also **authoritarian "revolutionary" parties** that look to the social movement as the **basis for their theories of revolution.** They believe they are the **enlightened vanguard** that must **direct and command the social movement** because they think themselves superior. It is the

WITHOUT PRIVATE PROPERTY AND WITH SELF-MANAGEMENT

For this **new society** to be founded on solidarity and mutual aid, it **must not support the institutions of capitalism: private property and the state**. In its place, as a form of social reorganisation, the system of **economic self-management and political federalism** should be implemented.

Private property must have been extinguished and **no one will be able to employ other people and steal part of their wages (surplus value) anymore.** In this model **no person owns the means of production** – machines, tools, land, sources of energy, etc. – because they are all **collective**.

> To say that something is collective means that it no longer belongs to one person. When something is collective it belongs to everyone. Everyone involved in something owns it and makes decisions about how to use it together.

Let's give a practical example. Consider a chair factory. In the future society, the factory and everything that belongs to it – machines, tools, land, etc. – is collective property; it does not belong to one or more people. So a person cannot sell the factory, they cannot be the boss of others, they can exploit others. Everything in the factory is collective, and all workers are equal in decision-making power.

A CLASSLESS SOCIETY

Unlike capitalism, the **new society will not have classes. There will not be those who dominate, who exploit, and those who are dominated, who are exploited**. This new society will be based on **solidarity and mutual aid** and people will no longer consider themselves competitors but, rather, **comrades**.

In this way, **solidarity will replace mutual mistrust and co-operation will eventually triumph over competition**. Since **private property**, now the source of so many divisions in society, and the power factor of the bourgeoisie, **will give way to collective ownership of the means of production (including land), distribution, exchange, of houses, etc.**

Domination and exploitation must have been eliminated and **although there will be conflicts**, which are inevitable, the most important thing is **to have a system that does not allow for a few to live well at the expense of so many others who live poorly.**

separation between manual labour – that of the humble wage earner or the unemployed – and that of the intellectual, who lives off of their theoretical production and feels they are in a position to express an opinion on the future of the worker. Almost always **infantilising the working class** for not having reached the "necessary consciousness".

There are also **other organisations** that try to **capture** social movements: **bureaucratised unions** that want support for their actions, **churches** that seek flocks, etc.

> All of these people must be kept away from the social movement because they do not defend the interests of the social movement, but their own interests. A social movements does not need commanders, leaders or people who want to use it for their own interests. A social movement needs people who want to support it and struggle together with it; but not to struggle for it, in its place. A place that is legitimised by the need for survival and the dignity of causes that promote true solidarity.

WHO WANTS TO SUPPORT THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Unlike those people that want to capture social movements, **there are those who want to support social movements**, which is very different.

These people are **sympathetic to the social movement** and consider **its struggle to be just** and so they **come to it to give support. These people should always be well received by the social movement**, because **people who want to struggle with a social movement should always be welcome.** Even **people who come from the middle classes** or **who are not directly involved in the struggles of the movement** should **receive this treatment:** someone who has a job can support the struggle of the unemployed, someone who has a house can support the struggle of the homeless, etc. This **kind of solidarity is fundamental** and must be **welcomed by the social movement.**

However, the individual candidacy to **support the social movement** must be **conditioned to the attitudes of those who intend to act in this situation. The supporter, or even the organisationally legitimised militant, must demonstrate that they are willing to listen much more than to speak.** They must **familiarise themselves with the circumstances** in which the natural members of the particular social movement in which they are acting live. As part of a whole, that is, of an organisation, **they must grow with it and not define its direction and form in an authoritarian and vertical way.** It is important to remember that **a process of col-**

THE NEW SOCIETY IT IS NECESSARY TO BUILD

Popular organisation points, as we have seen, **to a long-term objective**, which is the **replacement of capitalism**. This means **creating a new social regime**, that is, **another form of organisation of social life**.

As this is a **long-term project**, it is impossible to have absolutely everything thought out, but it is a case here of leaving **some thoughts on the subject**.

PEOPLE'S POWER

Many social movements speak of the **creation of "people's power"**. Is this banner the most appropriate?

The **concept of "people's power" is very broad**. There are people who support it, and who have **good ideas and concepts that are very close to those defined here as "popular organisation"**. However, **many others** who promote "people's power" are thinking of it in an **authoritarian way**, such as constructions "by the centre", dictatorial, exploitative and domineering forms.

The **conception of people's power that comes close to the popular organisation** promoted here holds that **power**, in reality, is a **relation of permanent political dispute between capitalists and anti-capitalists**, and that **building people's power would increase the social force on the anti-capitalists' side**. Thus, starting from the social and popular mobilisations one would be contributing to the social force that would be imposed on capitalism. In this case, the idea of people's power is very similar to the one advocated here; **the same thing with different words**.

However, **there are people who promote "people's power" by building movements that support vanguards detached from the grassroots, hierarchical relationships** in movements, **parties that overlap with social movements**, people who seek **to liberate society through the state, tyrannies and bureaucracies of all kinds**. In this case, **people's power has absolutely nothing to do** with what we call **popular organisation**.

lective construction is always, and above all, a process of self-development. Over time, if the group's proper code of conduct is followed, and only from it, **the supporter or militant will realise that the most important thing is to contrast their ideology with the reality of the group and not to try to reduce the social movement to their ideological certainties.**

> A social movement should welcome people who do not come to give orders, who do not want to be commanders or leaders. People who want to support the social movement, to struggle shoulder to shoulder, to discuss the issues of the struggle, offer their solidarity, help in times of crisis, help with organisation, must always have their strength added to that of the social movement.

COMBATIVENESS: NO TO THE SOCIAL PACT

For a **social movement** to point towards **popular organisation** it must be **combative**.

This means to say that, in its struggles against domination, it **can not always obey the rules of the capitalist system**. Let us remember that capitalism, through the State, is obliged to "guarantee the legitimacy" of the system. Therefore, **one of the strategies that the State uses is to draw social movements into itself**. They say that since we live in a democracy the movements can support a mayor or a councillor and make themselves heard in that way. **They want to establish what is called a "social pact"**.

A social movement must always incorporate class struggle and the class struggle **does not take place within the state**, but outside it. As the state is an arm of capitalism, **when the state absorbs a social movement** (we call it **co-option**), the movement no longer serves anti-capitalism, but capitalism. **This recourse is very common**, especially when **"left" governments come to power**.

> A social movement must always remain combative, that is, it must uphold its banner of struggle (for work, housing, land, etc.) outside the state, just as any other form of class struggle is sustained. Staying combative also means not going into other bureaucratic schemes, discussing everything with politicians, with the union bureaucracy etc. A combative movement is one that wins conquests by

DO WE WANT TO "TAKE POWER"?

The concept of "taking power" is outdated and misguided. This is because, **when fighting a system of exploitation and domination, the objective is not the creation of a new system that exploits and dominates.** The concept of **taking power** starts from the assumption that **the problem is who is in power and not power itself** – it is that idea of **changing the king, without ending the monarchy**.

In reality, **the problem is not who occupies the State, but the State itself**. Therefore, it is useless to think that if we take the power of the State, we can make the necessary change in society. In this sense, **the state must be destroyed** because **it facilitates the domination of those exploited by the ruling class.**

> As we have seen, the state is an effective tool in favour of the bourgeoisie. Things are not changed by handing all the achievements of the class over to centralised power. The form of organisation of the state is centralised and tends to eliminate all other forms of democratic organisation defended up to now for the social movement. The recent history of Brazil, for example, shows that even when a union worker comes into the presidency of the Republic, things still do not change in favour of the social movements.

DOES THIS MEAN BEING REVOLUTIONARY?

Yes. **A movement that is organised around a short and medium-term struggle and uses it as a means to a greater objective, against capitalism, is a revolutionary movement.**

The project of a revolutionary movement is linked to a conception of **grassroots organisation** that, the more **mobilised and radicalised** it is, the more it will point to a **revolutionary perspective**, that is, to **overcoming the capitalist system**.

> A revolutionary is someone who argues that capitalism must be replaced by a new system based on equality and freedom.

> imposing its social force and does not humiliatingly beg for crumbs from governments and bureaucrats. It demands and conquers with organisation and struggle.

It must know when to carry out a **peaceful action or one with more energy**, but a social movement **must always be combative. To confront the injustices and the system of domination and exploitation head-on, without falling into the traps of capitalism.**

DIRECT ACTION IN OPPOSITION TO REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Direct action is a **form of political action** that takes place **outside the electoral system**. This means to say that **social movements should not entrust their action to "qualified" politicians** that will be elected to later defend the interests of the social movement. Politicians always come around to get votes and after being elected they enter the "electoral machine" and never do what they had promised us.

It is very true that **sometimes honest politicians**, even **well-intentioned ones**, appear at **crucial moments and assist social movements**. But, **despite the exceptions, the political class as a whole forms a cohesive and unified bloc for defending the interests of capitalism.** Even those who enter the structures of state power with the aim of "helping the people" end up mixing the means with the ends and **confuse more than they clarify the social movements**. The terrain of party politics, within the framework of the state, presents some immediate advantage – and even so this is rare – but **generally it doubles the danger**. Thus, the **efforts of the "parliamentary left"** in favour of the working class – obviously that of the most committed part – in their sum **do not emancipate social movements.**

term struggle and long-term perspective are not mutually exclusive, but complementary.

For this reason, it is essential, always, **in absolutely every case, to sustain this long-term perspective of combatting and overthrowing the capitalist system, pointing to the construction of a new society.** The **short and medium term struggles** will serve the **day-to-day gains**, that **will alleviate daily suffering**, as well as **being a school** because **one only truly learns in the struggle**. This is a statement based on practice. For this reason, the **memory of social struggles** is important, as it forms the **accumulation of experiences** acquired by **social movements** over time.

A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE

A **long-term perspective of struggle** is the conception of the **ultimate objective**, that is, an answer to the question: **at the end of the whole struggle, where do we intend to arrive?** Anyone who is a **reformist** argues that the **end** you want to reach is **within capitalism**. For example: a movement of the unemployed that thinks that after getting a job everything will be solved is a reformist movement. A movement of homeless people who think that the struggle when they get housing is over is a reform movement. And even an informal settlement movement that struggles to be recognised and accepted by its exploiters, sometimes in the figure of the state, can take the same direction. This is because **capitalism will continue to exist and generate new excluded people. Exploitation and domination will continue.**

But is the struggle not against exploitation and domination? So, even if it is mobilised around short and medium term issues, **the movement must have what is called a long-term perspective if it wants to lead to the construction of popular organisation.**

> A long-term perspective exists when the movement thinks its short and medium term struggle is not the end. The end, for a movement that wants to fight against exploitation and domination, is to end capitalism, that is; to struggle to replace the capitalist system. The short and medium

Direct action, on the contrary, **is expressed when the social movement carries out its politics on its own**, when **workers themselves carry out their own actions of struggle against domination and exploitation**. This always **without relying on the bureaucratic and corrupt system** of advisers, councillors, deputies, senators, mayors, etc. **Much less associating programmes of struggle with electoral agendas.**

> A social movement that uses direct action acts outside the electoral system and represents the interests of the exploited who comprise it.

A social movement that uses direct action can carry out an occupation, a street demonstration, a strike, a street blockade, etc. There are **many forms of direct action: all of them put the exploited classes at the forefront of the process of change and the demands that are made.**

> The responsibility for the movement's victories must lie with the movement itself. It should not be given to politicians. Politicians defend their own interests and not the interests of social movements. Let us remember that "the emancipation of the workers will be the work of the workers themselves".

IS DIRECT ACTION NECESSARILY VIOLENT?

No. **Direct action can be peaceful or violent** and we should always reflect on what is the **best way to act**. Often, having a peaceful street demonstration on an issue that you want to expose, that is, **non-violent direct action**, is the best way to achieve the **desired ends**. For example, **sensitising the population** to a certain issue. **At other times, it becomes inevitable to use violence in response** to the violence of capitalism. But it is good to remember that workers' energy is **always used for their defence, in favour of their survival**, therefore it is, above all, **self-defence**. In this way **it is also a right**, provided for even in the civil codes of the bourgeoisie.

As we have seen **capitalism is a system that is based on violence** and, sometimes, it becomes inevitable to **use a certain degree of violence for self-defence**. For example, when the homeless are occupying a place and the police come to evict them, the use of **force as a response**, a **direct action of resistance**, is **legitimate and always valid**. It is enough for this – and this is a fundamental question – that **the collective affected by this state violence is fully convinced of the value of the action.** For this decision the political development of those in the social movement contributes a lot.

ISN'T THIS REFORMISM?

It has been argued so far that the **objective of the social movement is to build popular organisation that aims to defeat capitalism**, that is; an **anti-capitalist organisational model**. How can an anti-capitalist movement fight for gains within capitalism? Isn't this what is generally called "reformism"?

No. **What characterises reformism is the political project and the perspective of struggle that a person, a group or a movement has.**

> When short and medium term gains are seen as an end, then we can characterise those who support this position as reformist. A reformist is someone who believes that capitalism can be improved and considers this as an ideal end.

For example: a person who thinks there is a solution to the problems of society within capitalism is a reformist person. However, **this is radically different from someone who, mobilised around short and medium term struggles, has a political project and a long-term perspective of struggle.**

MEDIUM AND SHORT-TERM STRUGGLES

Invariably, the struggle of the social movement is for a **concrete question**, and it must be so. For example: one can be in a movement of unemployed people struggling for income generation; or among the landless fighting for rural settlements; one can even be in the communities, raising awareness of the counter-cultural message of hip-hop; in a union fighting for a wage increase, etc. These are the **social movement's short and medium term objectives.**

Every social movement must have its short and medium term objectives, as they are **the ones that will bring achievements that will make the activists' lives less painful. It is not wrong to fight for jobs, land, housing or better wages.** In fact, the search for these gains must **always be present**, as **it is what motivates and mobilises the exploited classes**. A movement that promises a good life 50 years from now does not attract people. It must always have **the prospect of immediate victories**.

ISN'T DIRECT ACTION OFTEN ILLEGAL?

Because the **state is part of capitalist society** its laws are made so that capitalism continues to function the way it has been functioning. So, **virtually anything that threatens capitalism is considered outside of the law.** A clear, historical example was the first explicitly bourgeois civil code, approved by Napoleon Bonaparte in the early nineteenth century in France. He even had articles banning the organisation of unions and even workers' demonstration by means of strikes. This set of laws served as a model for many others from then on. Still today the codes defend the authoritarian nature of the state and choose property as a guarantee of order.

For this reason, **many movements that aim to combat capitalism undertake actions that are considered illegal**. An action to occupy a property that doesn't have a social function is a combative action of a homeless movement, and considered outside the law by the capitalists. Sometimes, the police attack and even arrest those who are mobilised for shutting down a street in a demonstration demanding employment.

Now the question is: why is having a property and not using it for anything allowed, but when people who have nowhere to live occupy it, it is not allowed? Why is it allowed to have high unemployment, but when the unemployed mobilise and close a street, it is not allowed?

> What is more ethical and fair is almost never considered within the law. Movements must pursue

ideals of ethics and justice, regardless of whether they are inside the law or not. Let us remember that those who make the laws are the capitalists and, except for conquests imposed by the class, they will work in the service of capitalism. For this reason, fighting for ethics and justice often involves doing something that is outside the law.

A FEW PRECAUTIONS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN

Care must be taken **not to let values of capitalist society engender the social movement. Positions that must be fought on a daily basis are: hierarchy and authoritarian positions; comfort and laziness to struggle; nationalism and the state's defences; competition and individualism; slander and personal disagreements; racism, macho culture, homophobia** and other prejudices of society; the **drugs and alcoholism** that alienate people and distance them from struggle; **paternalism and charity**, of people who "feel sorry" and who really only want to share the crumbs that fall from their tables. **Great caution must be taken with this**.

repression. When repression occurs, lawyers will be able to help the movement forward public complaints, which may prevent activists from being arrested, help to get activists released (in case of arrest), or even defend them in a possible action.

> It is essential to remember that when there is mobilisation, invariably, the social movement ends up interfering with the privileges of bourgeois society and generally, the more these privileges are questioned, the greater the repression. The legal support of lawyers will be essential for the social movement, especially in situations of repression. However, it must never guide the political strategies or objectives of the struggle. It must not demobilise people by believing in a lawyer who will solve everything for everyone. Law is a bourgeois institution and one can not forget that, therefore legal support is secondary to the organisation of the struggle.

POLITICS IS NOT FOR THE POLITICIANS

Under the current system elected politicians, after being sworn in, **make whatever decisions they want**. When a politician is elected, in reality, **you give the right to do politics to them** and you only "participate" in the process every five years. This is not doing politics.

> Politics is not what politicians do but, rather, the management of what is public, of everything, that is, the management of our daily lives.
>
> Politics must be done by the people, properly organised, effectively deciding on everything that concerns them. The politics that social movements defend is one that is practiced today as a workers' struggle, organised from the bottom up, against the exploitation and domination of which they are victims. It is in the popular mobilisations that the prospects of significant social transformations in society lie. Politics in social movements is done by means of direct democracy.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY: WHEN EVERYONE TRULY DECIDES

Direct democracy is a form of **organisation** in which **all those involved participate directly in the decision-making process**, that is, a form of organisation in which **everyone decides**.

In **direct democracy** it is the people themselves who, gathered in an **assembly, make their decisions. There are no leaders who command the movement, all members of the social movement discuss and make their own decisions**. In short, **everyone is a leader at the same time. Politics is done every day, in the struggle and in the organisation.**

> A social movement that uses direct democracy has permanent assemblies, has no chiefs and does not base its action on the election of politicians. Its assemblies are horizontal (egalitarian and non-hierarchical participation), have the participation of everyone in the movement and are the place where all decisions are made. Consensus is always sought, but in case of differences of views voting can be accepted, the majority winning.

In a social movement that works with direct democracy it is the members themselves who decide their demands, their forms of action, how they will deal with supportive people

LEGAL SUPPORT

The social movement's **struggle generally implies repression**. It has been shown here that one of the ways in which the capitalist system is maintained is through the **state**, which is in charge of "keeping things working", that is; of **maintaining class society and its privileges**.

When **a social movement is organised and establishes a struggle objective**, it will **mobilise people** who are interested in a particular issue and, **through direct action, it will lay its claim**.

> The greater the social movement's social force, and the more it questions the roots of the capitalist system, the greater the likelihood of repression. So too, as the movement's activities and struggle increase, so does the state's response increase, in the form of repression.

This can happen in different ways: the repression of street demonstrations by the police, the arrest of activists, lawsuits, etc. For this reason, **it is fundamental that every social movement has well-established contacts with a "legal body" of lawyers that will provide support on legal matters.**

Lawyers can help in many ways. Firstly, they can help as "consultants" to the movement, for example, by assisting a homeless movement to identify vacant government buildings or even helping to identify private properties with family disputes in court. This is in a situation that is not one of

possible number of supporters and people sympathetic to the cause.

who want to help, and so on. **Within the movement everything is decided in an egalitarian way: everyone has the same decision-making power.** There may be various decision-making criteria, but they must always be established collectively.

ETHICS: A PRINCIPLE, A WAY OF CONDUCT

Social movement activists must **behave ethically.** But what is that?

Behaving ethically means that **our conduct must be based on life principles that oppose capitalism and are based on co-operation, solidarity and mutual aid.** Being an ethical person means **not contributing to the individual and political injury of comrades of the struggle, supporting other activists, not having attitudes that create splits and unfair internal dispute.** Being ethical is also **being responsible**. To a large extent, **ethics is an everyday practice, more evident in concrete actions than in** activists' sometimes very carefully chosen **words**.

COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

A social movement must have a **sector or commission that will be in charge of the communication and media**. This sector will be responsible for ensuring that **the movement's demands** are **made known to society**.

We know that **a large part of the media** is **committed to capitalism**, but **there are good people in this field who can help**. The communication and media comrades should seek to **establish a relationship** with journalists, broadcasters, editors, etc. **who are sympathetic to the movement's cause** and **always keep them informed of the complaints that the movement makes, of the actions taken, of victories, police repression, etc.**

In addition, the social movement must **communicate with society and seek support directly**, through **independent media vehicles** such as **free/community radio stations**, with the **publication of posters and pamphlets**, with **open publication websites** and all the communication structure's that are not integrated into what can be called "mass media".

> The social movement always needs all of society's support and this is why it must spread as much information as possible. To do so, it can use two ways. One, having good contacts with specific people who are inside the big media outlets. Another, using independent media vehicles. Anyway, the objective is to communicate the cause of the movement, make its issues known and seek the largest

PERSONAL RELATIONS

Personal relationships must always strive for an **environment of co-operation and mutual aid** in which **members of the social movement see themselves as comrades in the struggle and treat each other as such**.

The **working climate must be pleasant**, there must be **mutual respect, conflicts must be resolved in a non-violent way** and there must be **trust between the activists**.

This will **make the struggle stronger** and ensure that **the personal side does not interfere with the political side**.

> We do not have to like everyone in the social movement personally, that is; we are not obliged to be friends with everyone, but we have an obligation to respect everyone who is a comrade in the struggle.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Ethics and responsibility are **basic values** and are **radically opposed to the values of capitalism.**

A **responsible activist** takes **initiative, assumes responsibility** before the social movement and **fulfils** it, **completes the tasks** for which they were **responsible to the collective** and has **attitudes that are consistent with the spirit of struggle**. In short, someone who **contributes to the social movement** in the best way possible. **Responsibility in a social movement** is one of the most evident forms of **activist ethics** since, **by fulfilling the task for which they volunteered or were mandated, the individual does not overburden others**. They collaborate, in a solidaristic and crucial way, with the **social movement as a whole**, facilitating the achievement to the objectives previously determined by everyone.

In addition, **a responsible activist does not have irresponsible attitudes:** they do not have selfish attitudes that compromise the collective, they do not do things that harm the struggle, they do not fail to carry out important activities for the movement, they do not miss assemblies, etc.

Obviously, **all recommendations apply to people with a regular life and who,** in fact, **are able to carry out the task** in everyone's eyes. **The choice of activists for certain tasks is also a collective responsibility.** The collective can not be irresponsible with the individuals of the social movement. This is a form of **collective responsibility, therefore an ethics.**

However, the **placing of blame for incomplete tasks on certain individuals** who, because of this, are **branded and stigmatised** by the rest of the struggle comrades happens in social movements, and not infrequently. In such cases, also frequently, the **general lack of organisation**, of each one in relation to all, **finds in one activist the reason for the non-functioning of a whole structure**. Such a situation, which reveals **convenience more than responsibility**, explains **everyone's mistake in terms of one figure.** This is also an ethical deviation.

> It is essential that values that are opposed to the values of capitalism are maintained within the social movement. Ethics and responsibility, besides being pillars of the social movement, must oppose the whole culture of capitalism that has created a society of unethical and irresponsible people. The struggle for ethics and responsibility is a struggle against the values and culture of capitalism.

PRIORITIES, MODERATION AND ESCALATIONS

For decision-making to flow well **priorities, knowing what is most important when making decisions, must be established**. A social movement must spend **more time on what is more important** and **less time on what is less important**. It is often best to put the **most important issues at the beginning**, when **more people** are present.

It is always important to have **someone to facilitate the meeting. The facilitator has no hierarchy over others, but helps to guide the issues and discussions, stimulates the meeting, facilitates decision-making and ensures that the objectives of the meeting are achieved.**

Whenever something is decided, it is important that there are **minutes** recording **what was decided, allocating the responsibilities for the pending tasks and setting dates for the completion of the pending tasks**. The **resolutions** of meetings and assemblies (decisions, activities to be carried out) **must always be monitored and undertaken** by the social movement; obviously **in a non-authoritarian way and observing the social movement's ethical criteria.**

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Since the social movement advocates **direct democracy**, decision-making should be **as democratic as possible**, that is; it should facilitate an **environment in which everyone's opinions and suggestions are heard**, everyone has a **similar level of information** in order to be able to give their opinion, and **decisions are not made through coercion or fear**. For example, a movement can not make its decisions because one member threatens others or because they blackmail them.

It is **also not correct** for individuals or sectors of the social movement **to be silenced or unable to voice their opinion or participate in decision-making**.

Everyone should participate in both the discussions and the decision-making. For this, it is essential that everyone knows the **dates and times** of the meetings and the **agenda** that will be discussed in advance. In the end, the agenda can be agreed at the beginning of the meeting or assembly, but the ideal is for it to be defined earlier, so as to allow everyone time to consider the issues beforehand.

SOLIDARITY AND MUTUAL AID

In **opposition to the individualistic values** of capitalism **a social movement promotes solidarity and mutual aid**. Instead of competing with each other and disliking each other, solidarity and mutual aid stimulate **association with other members of the exploited classes**, both in resistance and in the struggle against capitalism itself.

When an **individual comes out of isolation** and joins with **other people who want to build a more just and egalitarian world**, they are actually building **class solidarity**.

This solidarity becomes real, first, when **one person associates with another to build a social movement**. Then, when **one social movement associates with another for a broader struggle**. The exploited groups are very different and solidarity means **uniting with other sectors, seeking for one to support the other, through a practice that we can call "mutual aid".**

THE STRUGGLE IS INTERNATIONALIST

When we affirm that the state is part of capitalism, it also means that **nationalist sentiment must be rejected. Nationalism is the preference for, or strong defence of everything that belongs to the country from which one comes.**

Throughout history, **defenders of the capitalist system** have always wanted to create a sense of **unity around the country**. For this, they use popular festivals and sports, such as the World Cup, to create what can be called "national identity".

> The real factor of identity with others is not by the country to which they belong, but by the class to which they belong.

There is nothing wrong with a like for sports or even cheering for the national team of someone's home country, but the problem is when one forgets that a **worker's identity must be a class identity** and, instead, it comes to be understood as national identity. When **nationalism overcomes classism**, regimes such as fascism appear, in which even the exploited classes become capable of supporting **regimes of domination and exploitation** in the name of a national ideal.

> Alliance must always be made with the exploited classes, whether they are in South Africa or abroad. When South African capitalism exploits the South African people, it is necessary to be on the side

simplest can be voted on by a **simple majority** winning, **those of medium importance can be voted on** with **more than 2/3** of the votes winning. Those **extremely important decisions can follow the consensus method**. It is essential to **establish a ceiling**, that is, a **maximum period of time for each discussion and for the meetings and assemblies themselves**. Nobody likes to spend all their time in meetings and assemblies.

EFFICIENCY IN DECISION-MAKING

The social movement's **discussion and decision-making spaces** must be **a means** and not an end in themselves. It may seem exaggerated to say this, but the fact is that there are people who think that the purpose of a social movement is just to hold meetings and horizontal assemblies.

No! **Meetings and assemblies are only a means for the movement to discuss its issues and make decisions** and, therefore, the **meetings need to be effective**. This means that they have to allow for the **participation of everyone**, a **good understanding of the issues to be discussed, different positions** on the issues and, especially, the **making of decisions**. No more than that.

There must be a concern for **things to really be resolved** and for the social movement **not to get stuck in endless debate**. For this, it is important that the **agenda is well defined**, that **opinions are given in the shortest possible time**, that people **do not keep repeating ideas** that have already been put forward and that the movement **discusses factual issues**. As stated, **consensus must be sought**, but **if there is no consensus there must be a vote and everyone must follow the positions that win**.

It is also important to think of an **appropriate method for each type of decision**. Decisions that are **not very important** must be **decided without wasting time. Important decisions** must **take up more time from activists**. In addition, there may be **different criteria for each decision: the**

> of the South African people. When South African capitalism exploits the people of another country, it is necessary to be with the people of the other country. If it is inevitable to have to choose who to make an alliance with, or what positions to defend, it is essential always to ally around class and never the country in which you live. National identity is part of capitalism and, since the people's struggle is anti-capitalist, the affirmation of internationalism is more consistent.

An internationalist struggle occurs when the barriers of the State are disregarded and the **solidarity of the social movements is established for all the struggles of other members of the exploited classes in the world**. There is no reason to prevent "foreign" workers. **If the foreigners are from the exploited classes they are also comrades. If they are from the ruling class they are quite probably enemies.**

A CHANGE THAT IS ALSO CULTURAL

The **social movement** must be the **preferred terrain for the development of a popular culture**. As we have seen, capitalism is embedded in all spaces of society and its culture is spread in various ways: through the media, the schools we attend, etc.

In opposition to this the social movement must **produce and develop a popular culture** that supports **new forms, languages and manifestations that translate values of opposition to capitalism**. This culture can be stimulated with music, theatre, lectures, debates, meetings, social gatherings, etc. It will be **essential for a change** that must also take place **within everyone**, by means of **popular education**.

> One should not wait for popular education to educate everyone in order to start struggling. However, it would be impossible to deny the absolutely fundamental role that education plays in all the activists of the social movement. It is essential.

ASSEMBLIES AND MEETINGS

All social movements that use **direct democracy** as an organisational method must, necessarily, have **assemblies or meetings** that are the movement's **deliberative instances**, that is, they are the **collective space for decision making**.

> A non-hierarchical social movement does not have a head that decides things and a body that obeys, so all issues of the movement must be discussed and resolved in the framework of assemblies or meetings, which are horizontal (equal and non-hierarchical participation); that is, everyone's opinion is equal. This condition directly defines the degree of organisation. Movements that allow the existence of an authoritarian leader or leadership are not sufficiently organised. A Mexican revolutionary used to say that the stronger the people, the less the need for leaders.

However, in order for the social movement not to **lose its focus** and not to **make meetings and assemblies an end in themselves**, some issues must be observed.

to achieve these objectives, and so on. The main idea to keep in mind is: **planning is absolutely essential**.

TO BUILD A SOCIAL MOVEMENT OR JOIN ONE THAT ALREADY EXISTS?

Sometimes, people are in doubt when they want to mobilise as to whether the best alternative is to **create a social movement or to join a social movement that already exists**. What is the best alternative? In fact, **any of the alternatives can be interesting**.

When there is **no social movement close** to a person who wants to fight for a particular cause, they can **look for other people** who have an interest in this struggle and **form a new social movement**. From there, it is only to **make sure that the social movement has the characteristics outlined here**.

However, if there is **already a social movement** that fights for something that this person wants to fight for, **there is no reason to create another movement**. It can occur that this movement is captured, very bureaucratic, not combative, etc. In this case, the alternative is to **join the social movement** and seek to **group together people** whose conceptions are close to what is understood by **popular organisation**, and which is being presented here, within it. From then on, their goal will be to make this **sector gains strength** so that it can **influence the rest of the movement**.

> The most important thing is to be mobilised. Forming a movement or joining a movement that already exists, causing it to have the characteristics

that we think are correct are both possible and important alternatives. It is up to each one to choose. The key is to know that struggle, social mobilisation, is the way to demand something.

pation. It will also think about organising assemblies so that the families can get to know each other and establish bonds of solidarity between them, which will be very important in the future.

b) The second commission will go around the city looking for real estate likely to be occupied. It will be crucial to think strategically about whether the best alternative is to occupy a government building or a private building, check the building's condition and facilities, see how it is closed off, how people can enter, etc. In the end, it will present one or more alternatives so that it can be decided which one is best.

c) The third commission, with the information from the second and knowing the movement, will think about what the occupation will be like. It will discuss the best time to occupy, that is, whether during the day or at night is best, what the occupiers will do, how they will enter the building, how they will see if there are no lights, etc. It will discuss whether the occupation will be on a weekday, or a weekend, etc.

d) The fourth commission will organise a structure with groups of occupants that can make the occupation successful, both in the first and most complicated moments, as well as after the immediate threat of eviction passes (if that happens). This commission will set up a structure of people that will be able to solve the place's electrical and hydraulic problems, another one that will be responsible for a collective kitchen (if this is the case), the creation of a security commission, the allocation of rooms between the families and and so on.

> It is very important to outline the objective(s), the strategic plan and periodically assess whether the social movement is on the right track. There's nothing better than practice to see if the whole theory works!

The strategic plan can be broader and include medium-term objectives, the medium-term actions that will be taken

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

A homeless movement organises itself to fight for housing. People have nowhere to live and they think that occupying properties with no social function is a good way out.

The objective of struggle (short term)
– Occupy a property with no social function, providing housing to the movement's activists.

Strategic plan
– Set up four commissions: one to talk to the families that will be part of the occupation and establish a programme to integrate these families (1), another to identify and evaluate possible properties to be occupied (2), another to discuss how and when the occupation action will be (3) and another one that will try to create the whole working structure for the future occupation (4).

For this, it will be necessary to reflect on how many and which people will be able to assist in the tasks, which of these activities will be confidential and which will be treated in open assemblies, what the maximum number of families that can occupy the property will be, what the terms to add new people interested in the occupation will be. In short, a series of organisational issues that, if not well thought out and executed, will certainly compromise the short-term objective of obtaining housing for all the movement's families.

We could detail the **strategic plan** in the following way, mainly from observation of the security question:

a) The first commission will establish a plan that will define with which families the commission will talk, stipulating in a transparent way the criteria for each family to join the occu-

ESTABLISH THE STRUGGLE'S OBJECTIVES (SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM)

A social movement must always have its **objectives of struggle** in a clearly defined way. When we talk about it, we basically have three types of objectives: short, medium and long term. Regarding the **short and medium term objectives**, they define **how far the movement wants to go in the short and medium term**.

> A movement without objectives goes in circles and has no focus. That is why it seldom achieves anything.

The **objectives of struggle will vary according to the struggle of the social movement**. For example, a movement against an increase in tuition fees may have as its main objective to prevent the increase from happening. In this case there is **only one objective**.

There may be **more than one objective**. When, for example, a union goes on strike and develops a "list of demands". In this case the demands are the objectives of the struggle. They can be: winning a 10% increase for the whole sector, solving the problem of wage losses for the last three years, paid overtime, etc. For a land occupation movement they can be, for example, carrying out an urban occupation and getting housing.

For a movement of the unemployed they can be: pressurising the government and winning an aid programme that creates some alternative income for the unemployed. And so on.

> The fundamental thing when the social movement is going to undertake any struggle is to clearly set the short and medium term objectives. The short term is what the movement is going to seek right away and the medium term can range from six months to a few years ahead. To outline the objectives it is enough to answer the question: what do we want to achieve with our movement in a certain period of time (one stage)?

CREATE A MORE OR LESS STRATEGIC PLAN

The movement's strategic plan is the path that will have to be carried out from "today" until the objective established for the next stage. In other words, it is to answer: **how to achieve the objectives set?**

> The strategic plan must be developed by establishing stages, with one objective (or more) of struggle per stage, and by establishing the actions that will be taken to achieve each objective. At the end of each stage, the movement should always stop, do a self-assessment and see if it has progressed well or not. If all is well the movement continues with the plan. If something is wrong it makes the necessary modifications so that the path is right.

"More or less strategic" is said because there is also **no point wasting time planning in the minutes detail and then not being able to do everything in practice**. The important thing is to **establish the general lines of the "thing" and to take action**.