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ISLAMO FASCISM:

DEFINITION, USE, BASES OF SUPPORT,
AND ITS ACTIONS AT WORKPLACES AND
NEIGHBOURHOODS

OCTOBER 2016

WORK DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION

This document has for the moment only been published in French and English and is a work in progress. The text has arrived at a certain level of maturity, and that's why we have presented it for the criticism of comrades without waiting for further developments in the situation. We will take account of criticism received in the eventual publication of another pamphlet which will then be translated into various languages, as is usual.

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INTRODUCTION

We've been using the concept of Islamo-fascism for several years to designate one of the tendencies within political Islam¹. Therefore, if we don't want it to be a vacuous empty slogan, we need to define it precisely. To do so, we will verify the relevance of the notion of Islamo-fascism using the yardstick of the criteria that we've already identified (see the booklet *"Democracy and Fascism: two unified forms of the dictatorship of Capital"*, in French only so far). Then, we will clarify some points on the practice of these movements that are an expression of it, and some already constituted states (like Iran), and the nature of the support they attract (including the struggle against "islamophobia"). The text also touches upon the ideological and organisational convergence between Islamo-fascism and Islamo-leftism that mix the defence of an oppressed religion or armed jihad, in the name of a supposed anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-imperialist struggle.

Finally, one of the components of Islamo-fascism being its relation to religion, we will take a look at this aspect by directing readers to some already published texts:

"Regarding questions posed by the assassination of Theo Van Gogh" (letter n°14, November 2004)

"In response to the attack on Charlie Hebdo the proletariat has to take up the ruthless struggle against the violent religious fanaticism which reinforces the state and increases divisions within the exploited and oppressed" (Bulletin n°7, January 2015)

"Fight the deception of the state's warmongering slogans. Class war is the only possible response to the mass murderers. Neither gods, nor masters, nor states, nor bosses" (leaflet, November 15th 2015)

Along with a text by Lenin, *"The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion"* (13 May 1909) as a detailed analysis of the issue of religion within the working class movement.

THE CRITERIA FOR DEFINING FASCISM

Hereafter we give criteria to identify fascist regimes and movements (in a different order than in the "Democracy and Fascism" booklet) in order of importance. These criteria are based on an analysis of those historically founding regimes of Italian Fascism and German Nazism. In the booklet cited above, we extended this characterisation to Russian Stalinism². These criteria born from the analysis of established regimes (in power) also apply to movements aspiring to power or to those who claim to be such.

Relation with intermediate bodies

In contrast to democracy, the intermediary bodies of civil society (political parties, unions, professional associations) are either destroyed or absorbed (and emptied of their original content) by fascist states. There can be no intermediary bodies outside the structure of a fascist state. This is particularly the case with the unions, which become one of the mainstays of the state.

Economic Nationalism

Fascist regimes increase state intervention and push autarchy. They reorganise the economy by merging companies. They establish protectionist measures (monopoly on foreign trade, controls on foreign exchange).

Extra-legal violence

Either during their rise to power, or even once in power (even if new laws are brought in), the use of extra-legal violence to resolve conflicts is an integral part of fascist regimes.

Negation of class conflict

In opposition to democracy that feeds on this conflict, fascism negates it. Fascism doesn't see

¹ Not every part of political Islam is fascist, for example the AKP in Turkey.

² In other works, these criteria helped us analyse Peronism in Argentina (Work Document n°5).

the utility of the engine of class struggle for capitalist development.

Inside/Outside (national community)

Thus, fascism must define an “inside” (national community where everything is controlled to achieve “national happiness”) and an “outside” (into which “foreigners” must be pushed back and annihilated).

Interclassism

During their rise to power, fascist movements, gather members of every class of civil society, including workers (be it as a bloc or as individuals).

Exacerbated Nationalism

A national community needs to be cemented beyond the identification of “foreigners”, and this cement is nationalism. If it doesn't exist in an obvious manner, it is reinforced by searching for justifications in the most remote history by invoking greatness in need of restauration.

Some Remarks

Elections

The attitude towards elections after taking power covers a broad spectrum that it's hard to generalise about. From the banning of elections (Germany, Italy), elections with fictitious opposition (USSR, Eastern European countries), controlled elections (Iran) to free “tough” elections (Argentina), variations are many. Likewise, some authoritarian regimes or military dictatorships, current or past, have had many different attitudes to elections.

Charismatic leader

Fascist regimes all have a charismatic leader personifying them (Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Peron, Mao, etc.) but it's not their exclusive attribute. Bonapartist regimes or classical dictatorships have also often been personified by a symbolic leader.

APPLICATION TO ISLAMO FASCISM

Foreword

The point is not to produce an exhaustive index of all Islamo-fascist movements but to apply a method and verify its application. The paradigm of Islamo-fascist regimes is obviously the one of the Iranian mullahs, but there are others too: those born of Ba'athism (Syria, Iraq, Egypt or their Algerian FLN cousin) where the merging of the state apparatus (specifically the army), the party and a single union, reminds us of their alignment with Russian Stalinism.

However, even at that time, these regimes were not opposed to Islam and always spared it. Naturally, when links grew weaker with USSR they strongly supported a return of Islam to the forefront, even when, in the case of Algeria, it meant a merciless civil war between the army and FIS from 1992 to 2002. This model aimed at the creation of post-colonial economies, with a strong industrial sector, a unified internal market and a strong secular state while not directly confronting Islam³.

This project was undermined by the progressive collapse of the Russian bloc and the emergency, from the rubble of national liberation struggles, of a parasitic ruling caste, corrupt, despotic and inefficient. Moreover, in the case of Syria and Iraq, the regime based itself on religious minorities against the majority of its population (Alawites, Christians, Ismailis and Druze against the

³ For example in Algeria, already in its first constitution, in September 1963, in its article #4, Islam is recognized as state religion.

Sunni majority; the Sunnis in Iraq, against Shi'a majority).

Relation with intermediate bodies

Given the examples of the regime we cited above, it is obvious that the intermediate bodies cannot exist on an independent basis (or while in hiding, underground) whether for parties, unions or associations.

Economic nationalism

Iran, the main example of a regime created from Islamo-fascism, maintained for 35 years the monopoly of foreign trade and exchange controls, and attempted an autonomous capitalist development. In fact, given the embargo and the weak local technical capacity, it was soon limited to simply maintaining what already existed.

After the 1979 revolution, the new ruling class of Iran attempted to nationalize the economy not only through the nationalization of companies, but by abstracting, or attempting to isolate, itself from the world market (not so much with goods, but at least with credit). This nationalism also explains the significant support of the population, and not just the classes in solidarity with the regime, such as the merchants of the *Bazaar*. By establishing the monopoly of foreign trade, by controlling imports, by attempting an autonomous development and by relying only on oil as a major provider of additional capital, the Iran of the mullahs tried to build, on its own level, a kind of "socialism in one country" as had been attempted before by Stalin's USSR and Mao's China.

Without going as far as what was accomplished in Iran, Ba'athist regimes and the FLN have always maintained a strong economic nationalism, especially in the extractive industries and mainly regarding oil and gas, whose rents are the main income.

Extra-legal violence

Here there's no need to review the list of the violent acts exerted by these regimes against the general population, ethnic or religious minorities and, of course, the working class.

Negation of class conflict

Internal / External (national community)

There is no objective basis for the establishment of such a community, neither "racial" laws that would have a real foundation nor concrete factors that would define the "good" and "true" believer. Thus it remains to define the community of believers by the negative, with the evocation of the "scapegoat". He is none other than the one who is not part of this fictive community, the one who is the visible negation of it, its inverted stereotype. For the Nazi racial and blood community, the designated scapegoat was "the Jew", depicted with all its caricatural physical, moral and religious attributes. In fact, the compulsory wearing of the star as a visible sign of discrimination was used to provide the certainty of the difference from the Germanic people. The internal and external enemy being so designated, the member of the community can identify himself with what he is not. In the case of the closed Muslim community, "the other" enemy is the "crusader", the apostate, the unbeliever ... and of course the cosmopolitan "Jew", treated in the same way as he was by the Nazis, despite the superficial gloss of the struggle against Zionism.

Interclassism

What characterizes the countries where flourished and prospered Islamo-fascism, is the absence of an indigenous bourgeoisie able to develop the capital in these territories. Modern industry (often only extractive) was imported from outside or implemented by the State (be it the Shah or the Ba'athist regimes).

Given the numerical weakness (but not the importance) of the workers in these countries, the regimes had an attitude of preventive control, expressed through state unions, or a simple repressive one through the police (and through the armed wing of the regime, the Basij in Iran) if the workers dared to strike and, even worse, come out in to the street.

Exacerbated nationalism

Although the short merger of Egypt and Syria from 1958 to 1961 may suggest otherwise, in all these regimes nationalism, the defence of the nation under attack from outside (and it's not only Israel which is the external enemy), constitutes the cement, including when it sometime contradicts religion.

The problem of Sunnism

Sunnism, unlike Shi'ism, does not see the nation-state as its basis, but rather highlights the Islamic concept of umma, the community of believers, regardless of their nationality, their blood ties and the political powers that govern them. The term is synonymous with *ummat islamiyya*, "the Islamic Nation". It is supranational and creates an Islamic religious nationalism. In this sense, it fully corresponds to the characteristics of a fascism involving exacerbated nationalism and geographical expansionism build on a-historical myths, beliefs that have no current, or even ancient, reality.

Specific points

Below we set out some particular points which allow us to specify some common points between historical fascisms.

A facade of anti-capitalism

The denunciation of some specific forms of capital can range from the rejection of "financial" capital, always perceived, according to fascist ideologues of all stripes, as parasitic and cosmopolitan, to the "struggle against imperialism" of competing countries. Invariably, this leads to the defence of the "good" national productive capital, whether state owned or private property. We can find these misconceptions among the traditional fascists, the red Stalinist fascists, their anti-imperialist Third Worldist variant and the Islamo-fascists. Today in France, economic nationalist ideology is embraced by both the National Front and the Left Front, two political parties that share policies of protectionism, leaving the euro zone and state intervention⁴. These factual absurdities do not reflect the organic relationship in mature capitalism between credit and productive investment, nor the primary determination of the world market. The partial denunciation of certain forms of capital is often related to the needs of the hour. When a fascist movement comes to power, it must adapt to the needs of national social capital even, as in "the night of the long knives" (elimination in Germany, on 29/30 June 1934, of the key executives of the SA by the SS), if necessary to erase its uncontrollable tendencies in favour of building a stable regime and some sort of capitalist rationality.

This type of antagonism exists today in Iran's Islamo-fascist regime between the summit of the Islamic State and the "Pasdaran", the military structure of the "Revolutionary Guards", who are directly under the authority of the Revolutionary Guide Ali Khamenei. See our letter No. 31, December 2009, *Iran: popular discontent rises to the surface*, in which we explain the nature of the two pillars of the regime, the Pasdaran and the Basij.

The mixture of modernity and reaction

This also applies to the historic fascisms with their fascination with the cult of speed expressed in Mussolini's Italy in the Futurist art movement of Marinetti (which was from 1918 a founding member of the fascist regroupment). It was an artistic current which served Italian fascism well from its origins. This modernity can also be found in Nazism and its avant-gardist use of cinema as a means of mass propaganda, as in "*Triumph of the Will*" by Leni Riefenstahl, 1935, and "*The Jew Süss*",

⁴ It is typical of fascism not to have its own economic project but to adapt itself according to the phases of the economic cycle and to the ideological atmosphere of the time.

1940, personally supervised by Goebbels. The set design elaborated by Nazi modernism was also apparent in the Olympic Games and other gigantic spectacles dedicated to the glory of the regime. Stalinism also took on the gigantism of Nazi architecture along with various elements of staged mass displays. But the declared modernism didn't go without the sacralisation of the subordination of women to men and the family, setting out a cramped, moralising and repressive conception of sexuality and the education of children. Such is the "Work-Family-Nation" of the Pétainist Vichy regime, and the even more famous "KKK: *Kinder -Küche- Kirche*" (Children-Kitchen-Church) of the Nazis.

These puritan values would be shared by Stalinism and, nearer today, by Islamo-fascism applied under Sharia – the Islamic law which stains social relations with sexism, homophobia and, more generally, with generalised segregation. For Islamo-fascism, this ultra-reactionary moralising is in no way incompatible with the modern use of cutting edge technologies, as for the Nazis, in propaganda and war.

The woman question

The subordination of women constitutes an ideological pillar of Islamo-fascism. The constant stress on their servitude in relation to men and the necessity of controlling their bodies, whether by keeping them at home or by sexually stigmatising "free" women never ceases, verbally and practically, right up to death by stoning in some cases. Hatred of women, in theory as in practice, is an expression of the abject reactionary character of political Islam. The current of so-called Islamic feminism, whether it's in the universities or in political organisations, and in all its varied forms, makes up at the same time a counter-current and a response which cannot dissolve itself at the horizon of communism. On the one hand, it's supposedly an attempt at the internal reform of Islam: the reinterpretation of religious sources aiming at promoting an Islam which is supposedly peaceful and emancipatory. In fact it is nothing more than a desire to consolidate political Islam in its "moderate" or "modern" forms which are more acceptable to the West. On the other hand, this current just adds a supplementary mystification to the oppression of women which makes up the DNA of all religions.

The Muslim Brotherhood

Their numerous organisations in Egypt⁵ devoted to charity, education etc. activate civil society and therefore make up part of it. For the moment, even if workers, as a class, do not make up part of their social base and they condemn strikes and support the bosses (generally and during actual conflicts), the Brothers have still managed to recruit workers as individuals. And it hasn't stopped them trying to infiltrate unions.

The uses of Islamo-fascism

Clash of civilisations?

Because of the rise of political Islam and then of Islamo-fascism, the leaders of Western states and their analysts have begun to talk about the clash of civilisations.

"*We are at war*" is a declaration which is even more catastrophist than it is weakly grounded in reality. It raises up state terrorism, active, preventive preparation for the counter-revolution. The "we" which is the flower of national unity, the indispensable condition for any real war. Clearly, the enemy is no longer Germanic barbarism and its spiked helmets. The precondition for any war defining an enemy, an enemy which must be implacable, cruel, inhuman. The caliphate fits this description perfectly and, what's more, it's inoffensive on the strictly military level despite their odious and cowardly attacks against defenceless people.

⁵ For further explanation, we refer the reader to our pamphlet n°3 "*Egypt: A historic compromise over an attempt at democratic change*" (October 2011) and to the working document n°7 "*Égypte: Un coup d'État au nom de la démocratie et du peuple*" (October 2013, only available in French).

No foreign army is marching down the Champs Elysées, no trenches prevent the arrival of the invaders at Verdun. It's therefore necessary to organise the spectacle of war, the army in the streets, armoured cars in the squares and other non-strategic places. The real strategic locations, barracks, command centres, communication hubs, nuclear power stations, fuel depots, arms dumps.... are in no way targeted by the comic opera soldiers of violent political Islam.

There's nothing better for reinforcing the state and all of its repressive apparatuses than adopting the freedom-killing measures associated with a real war. The "*we are at war*" prepares the population for less freedom in the name of (very) dear security and the maintenance of capitalist order. To make the state of emergency permanent by writing it into the Constitution, as Hollande (supported by everyone else, including Marine Le Pen) has proposed, would realise an Nth "democratic" *coup d'État* of the kind that France has been very good at for a long time. But what good is a democratic *coup d'État* today? The opportunity presented by these attacks is obvious and has been used copiously to militarise social life little by little, armouring the capitalist order. There's not so much need for a sophisticated Italian-style "*strategy of tension*", since the pretext for a "democratic" *coup d'État* has been provided free and on home turf by a gang of brainless thugs. Thus, incidentally, the recent killings allow the state puppets to rise in the polls again.

The new anti-fascism

Once a permanent state of emergency is declared, civil society has to be reorganised in line with it and the old polarisation of the Second World War between aggressive fascism and democratic anti-fascism dug up again.

The interest of "*republican*" and/or antifascist frontism lies in creating alliances which in other circumstances would appear incongruous or impossible. It's only in these contexts that you can see the electorate of the "left" vote for the "right", as happens today, and the Gaullists fraternise with the Stalinists, as in the past. The warmongering reconstitution of sacrosanct national unity is the practical, forced negation of class struggle. Fascism, and this is equally true of its Islamic variant, is then presented as a pathological and perverse excrescence, an absolute evil – the foul beast – in the face of which all other oppositions must be erased, to present a unified front of responsible and patriotic citizens. This front is by its nature interclassist, and that's why the Italian communist left was able to state in its time that: "*antifascism is the worst product of fascism*".

THE SUPPORTERS OF ISLAMO-FASCISM

The underlying principle of basically indulging and supporting Islamo-fascist regimes or movements is just an extension of the principle which is already applied to the working class: the oppressed cannot be oppressors. When this principle is applied to immigrants in general⁶ and when it is coupled with the religion, Islam (reduced here to the variants of Sunni'ism), which is supposed to be that of the oppressed, then everything is permitted.

In this continuity, old practices are aggregated. They range from anti-racist empathy against Islamophobia, recycled anti-imperialism, and, of course, anti-Semitism.

The struggle against Islamophobia

Beyond the confusing word itself (there isn't really fear, but hatred of Islam, and on an undifferentiated basis⁷), the people who invented this concept use it to prevent any criticism of Islam (and hence criticism of religions in general) on the pretext that Islam is the religion of the oppressed in the developed countries of capitalism. Of course, for the most apologetic, even in countries where Islam is the dominant religion, they see the oppressed as inherently unable to oppress. On the one hand, here (in the "West"), class differences exist within the catalogued-as-Muslim population (even if

⁶ See Cologne events in "Cologne: attacks against women are the product of patriarchal domination and play into the hands of anti-immigrant racists" Bulletin MC/kpK #9 1st February 2016.

⁷ Ignoring differences between the multiple variants within Sunnism and Shi'ism, without mentioning offshoots like the Khawarij.

proletarians are the majority) and the omission of the character of class is intended to divide, a little more, the proletariat.

On the other hand, “there”, as we wrote in a leaflet after the attacks of 11 September 2001⁸ :
“The story is that this utterly backwards ideology - expression of the failure of the ruling classes of these areas to create the economic and social conditions for modern capitalism – far from supplying a well-fitted frame to the justified revolt of the oppressed people, traps them in an outdated fight, whose true goal is to subordinate the more and more oppressed “faithful” to the whole of the “Muslim” ruling classes. What is there in common between the young unemployed in Gaza or Algiers and the billionaires from the Gulf or ruling classes from the area’s states, except religious belonging? Obviously nothing. Islam is used here only to create a fake community between “Muslim” oppressors and oppressed which the area’s proletariat never cease to pay for.

*Political Islamism, as a substitute for the class struggle, has also been chosen by minority fractions of immigrant youth in Europe (France and Belgium particularly). Here, resentment has been fed by mass unemployment and racism and has been made use of by some religious groups. The real revolt has then been trapped in the reactionary ghetto of Islam, of the *oumma* (Faithfull community), which has contributed, along with the surrounding racism, to isolate these rebellious people from working class people of European extraction. In the end this plays the game of all those, from governments to bosses, who have an interest in dividing exploited people”*

The fascist counter-revolution and useful idiots

The fight against Islamophobia by some sectors of the left and extreme left of capital is a fight which claims to defend the “Muslim” masses oppressed by the West. It doesn’t only provide arguments for the division of the class into “Westernised” proletarians and proletarians “excluded” because of religious discrimination. The fight against Islamophobia also ultimately reinforces the motivations of those who fight for political Islam with weapons in hand, and hinders revolutionary recomposition across the divisions in the working class and its natural allies, the poor peasantry and women.

In the current tense ideological climate, most of the fractions of the extreme left of capital (Stalinists, Trotskyists, Maoists, anarchists, anti-globalisationists, “Attacists”...) employ the concept of Islamophobia extensively. In the past, these same leftists employed in the same way the equally harmful and misleading concept of “the anti-fascist democratic” struggle, the absolute foil to any effective struggle, to any direct action against fascism and the mode of production that underpins it: that of mature capitalism.

Communism is not afraid of Islam or any other religion, it criticizes them all as a basic form of organized alienated consciousness around faith, a false consciousness that denies material reality. The fashionable invective of Islamophobia aimed at revolutionary communists relies on a series of false and pernicious ideas, like the one that claims that Islam is more useful than other religions to the cause of the oppressed. This is an assertion quickly swept away once we think about the Saudi oil monarchies, about the kingdom of Morocco or the dictatorship of the mullahs in Iran. Several islamophile ideologues identify within traditional Islam the appearance of a kind of “new liberation theology” as Camilo Torres and Gustavo Gutierrez did for Catholicism from 1966. We could show for example the evolution of the former Maoist, Mounir Chafiq, Islamic member of Fatah today at the head of the nationalist Congress. This guy would like to be the “left” of political Islamism that we should therefore support “in a critical way”⁹. A fierce defender of Palestinian nationalism, Mounir Chafiq is also linked to the Islamic Liberation Movement and embodies the landslide shift of secular and pan-Arabist leftism of the 1970s and 1980 towards a National Socialist Islamism, whose two invariant references are anti-Americanism and Judaeophobia.

For many years, Arab and Persian regions have been under the control of political regimes that are similar to the Fascist regimes in their Soviet variants, such as the Ba’athist regimes of Saddam Hussein and Hafez Al-Assad, Nasser, the “green revolution” of Gaddafi and, of course, the Republic of the mullahs in Iran.

⁸ From the leaflet “Against crusade and jihad! For class struggle!” of 8/10/2001. See: http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Leaflets/TR011008_Against%20crusade%20and%20jihad_EN.pdf

⁹ See: <http://liberation-islamique.com/>

It is the disappearance of several of these dictatorships against the background of the historical bankruptcy of the democratic revolutions of national liberation and the collapse of the Russian imperialist bloc which has paved the way for the current Islamo-fascism. The latter comfortably moved into the vacuum left by the fall of these secular or religious dictatorships. Islamo-fascism is an expression of a lack of development of capital, of the most backward commercial capital, of rent and comes out of the tribal organization of marginal segments of the society of capital. Given that this is true, then the ideology of the struggle between civilizations that these groups would express is just a bad remake of the cold war, a watered down third-world version. In this view, there is no longer the capitalist West against the more or less degenerate homeland of real socialism, but the sinful and decadent West against the ancient orient and the regenerative *umma* of Islam, traditional and tribal. However, this unlikely *umma* is soluble in the capital that sometimes lets it survive in its anti-proletarian function, and sometimes fights it if it dares threaten timidly its fundamental interests, its overall valorisation process and global agenda of socialised labour. Support for Islamo-fascism in all its variations, and especially in its more reactionary variants, is the exact opposite of the struggle against capitalism and its imperialist expressions.

Imperialism

We cannot blame Lenin for what his self-proclaimed heirs did with his most polemical texts¹⁰. These texts deserve contextual criticism¹¹ but before we go there, we have to first criticise the false and dishonest use made of them by leftists and anti-imperialists, particularly *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*, written in Zurich in 1916.

In his book, Lenin introduced his contribution as "an exercise in vulgarisation" of the book "Imperialism" by the English economist J. A. Hobson (published in 1902), and it is also inspired by Rudolf Hilferding's "Finance Capital" (published in 1910). Hobson, the social-liberal economist, basing his observations on the Boer War (1899-1902) and the Spanish-American War (1898), claimed that the youthful phase of capitalism, characterised in particular by the process of colonization, was over.

In the late nineteenth century, the whole world was completely dominated by capitalism. At that time, the domination of capital carried out at the expense of previous modes of production was nearing completion. This opens up a period of wars in order to share out the plunder from the colonies. Hilferding, a Social Democratic activist in Austria and Germany, wanted to update the developments of capitalism, especially the dominant influence of finance capital (by the merging of bank capital and industrial capital) and the importance of "trusts" and monopolies. For states the result was imperialist foreign policies.

This change in the nature of war, from colonial war to war over the colonies, is called "modern imperialism" to differentiate it from the old historical tendency to form empires (imperialism in its etymological sense). Obviously it's the First World War that expressed the imperialist nature of *all belligerent states* and, more broadly, all capitalist states, the most clearly. Consequently, all capital's wars are *inter-imperialist wars*. In the phase of the real subsumption of labour to capital, all capitalist states are imperialist, big or small, democratic or dictatorial. This is why Lenin launched the slogan of revolutionary defeatism, and the fight against "its" own bourgeoisie in all the camps involved in the war of 1914-18.

We endorse this reading, which is opposed to the interpretation of imperialism given by the leftists. However, this vision restricted to the expansionary aspect of competition between states, is not central to the characterisation of imperialism established by Lenin and composed of five criteria. Moreover,

¹⁰ Here we refer to "What Is To Be Done?", "[Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder](#)" and "[Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism](#)"

¹¹ That we began in Letter Number 24, "Critical Review of the ABC of Communism", May 2007. See: <http://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/Letters/LTMC0724.pdf>

we do not share the view of the relevance of Lenin's¹² criteria in defining the imperialist nature of capitalism.

The anti-imperialists, on the other hand, recognise only the strongest imperialism, the most dominant, which today is the USA. This designation makes imperialist policy the exclusive prerogative of one portion of capital, absolving all the others. Thus, the "Third World" should strive to see only US imperialism as the enemy of mankind ("Yankee Go Home!") – or The Great Satan in its Islamic version - letting the smaller imperialisms off, or even holding them to be progressive¹³.

This unilateral vision of imperialism has its roots in the Stalinist counter-revolution for which the USSR¹⁴, as a "workers'" state could not be imperialist. It's an assertion belied by all the armed expansionist actions by the USSR, from the annexation of the Baltic states and part of Poland (as a result of the Nazi-Soviet Pact), then the constitution of the Soviet post-war bloc (under the Yalta agreements), to the colonial wars in Afghanistan, via Hungary, Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola ... An imperial policy that was in perfect continuity with the Great-Russian policy of the tsars and which is taken up again today by the "democratic" dictator Putin.

At the root of these deviations are also the remnants of the national questions that capitalism could not, or didn't want to, or didn't know how to, solve once and for all. Depending on the conception of the permanent national liberation struggle, the wars of independence not only freed the peoples from colonial or neo-colonial oppression but were also the ultimate weapon against capitalism and imperialism (exclusively "Western" in their eyes).

Reality sweeps away this nonsense. If we consider the archetype of the "victorious" model of these wars, the Second Vietnam War, we can note that the North, supported by Russia and to a lesser extent by China, almost as soon it defeated the South, invaded its former Cambodian ally in 1978.

Today, relying on precisely such nonsense, some attempt to explain or justify the attacks and slaughter by the *déclassés* of political Islamism as a "justified" response to Western imperialism and particularly to France, a country which in its own small way has intervened recently in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Central Africa, Mali and Syria.

Some of the anti-imperialist camp would even like to see a replay of the war in Algeria, with its networks of support and the polarization between pro and anti. Others take the opportunity to portray the Palestinian conflict as a struggle for liberation against an entire population that is exclusively composed of oppressors and settlers. Any excuse to support the outbreak of a state of war and its warmongering speech, even importing the mystified imagination, fed by vulgar anti-Semitism, of some individuals from the poor suburbs, identifying with conflicts without having to pay the price for participating in them.

ISLAMO FASCISM IN ACTION

Islamo fascism at sites of production

SNCF (French National Railways)

A few years ago, railwaymen comrades from Paris Saint-Lazare (a railway station) informed us that a driver wearing all the signs of an Islamist, systematically refused to hand back the keys to the

¹² Ibid.

¹³ A fine example of this unilateral vision (among many others) is "All our action is a battle cry against imperialism and a strong appeal to the unity of the peoples against the great enemy of mankind: the United States.", Ernesto Che Guevara : <http://www.toupie.org/Dictionnaire/Imperialisme.htm>

¹⁴ One example is Victor Serge, breaking with Trotskyism, who spoke of the "new Russian imperialism." See the collection of his texts published by Editions Spartacus No.50.

next train driver when it happened to be a woman. Then the SNCF management transferred him, but without any penalty. This could be considered as an isolated incident.

RATP (Paris Transit Authority)

At RATP however, among the bus drivers, the phenomenon has grown in two directions: against female bus drivers in the Nanterre depot and against other drivers at several depots in Seine Saint Denis. In the first case, self-proclaimed Islamist drivers¹⁵ decided to first of all completely ignore their female colleagues (refusal to shake hands, refusal to simply acknowledge them, refusing to drive a bus after them), then making comments, in an increasingly aggressive manner, bordering on harassment. Faced with the silence of the depot management and the RATP bosses, and the trade unions' embarrassed attitude, some of them felt forced to complain and to publicize these attitudes. The situation was exposed in December 2012 and publicised in February 2013 and had national coverage after the terror attacks in November 2015.

Vis-à-vis male colleagues, the problem was primarily at the terminus of the lines, with the transformation of the toilets into improvised prayer places, blocking the needs of drivers. It would be laughable if it was not a deliberate policy to gang up (facing the hostility of the other drivers), appeal to the hesitant and denounce racism.

There was no attempt to create an "Islamist" yellow union at RATP or, for now, company repression. It is true that the RATP management has, for ages, supported the united trade union front of the representative organizations and has always opposed the building of a new union¹⁶.

Air France (Air transport company)

For now, the influence of Islamo-fascists is limited to influencing canteens not to serve pork dishes and for some crew members to ignore female staff.

Servair (Catering subsidiary of Air France)

But it is at Servair that Islamo-fascism is really going on. To buy social peace from workers categorized (and self-categorizing) as Arabs or immigrants (while most of them have French papers), living in the neighbouring towns of Seine-Saint-Denis, the management allowed the creation of a kind of covert "closed shop" associated with a policy of turning a blind eye to small fiddles. Management played on the division between the various unions (FO, UNSA, CGC) against the majority CGT. After years of passivity in the face of this phenomenon (for fear of being accused of racism) the CGT finally reacted by expelling 500 of its members (including ten delegates of the Roissy Escales branch) in December 2013 for being "Islamism friendly" – some of them had publicly supported¹⁷ Dieudonné in the "quenelles" case.

Those expelled joined a new union, the SLICA (Syndicat Libre et Indépendant du Commissariat Aérien)¹⁸ in June 2013. The union was immediately recognized by the management as being representative and therefore the former CGT stewards became recognized SLICA stewards. Moreover, at professional elections at Servair unit 1, the SLICA has already collected 11.28% of votes. Concretely, that translates, on the individual level, into pressure against women (refusal to acknowledge, refusal to talk with them). It also means that workers from a Maghrebian background are refusing to talk to others because they are not Muslims, and a few Christian workers from the Middle East are forced by violence to respect Ramadan. At Servair 1, Friday prayers are organized in the locker room (with hours posted) and the union notices are mixed up with religious ones. On a company level, SLICA has already refused to strike (whatever we might think of the quality of the

¹⁵ We are not doctors of theology but we doubt the competence of the drivers in matters of religion.

¹⁶ This included the case of the FN when it wanted to create its own union in continuity with the movement of November-December 1995 – the management and the unions, united in the name of trade union apoliticism, blocked these attempts.

¹⁷ On facebook among other places. See: http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2014/01/30/quenelle-groupee-chez-la-cgt-d-air-france_976686

¹⁸ See: <http://www.slicagroupe.fr/> SLICA had existed in a confidential manner since 2008.

strike) in July 2014, allowing management to manipulate the division. This follows its acceptance of “Transform 2015” (a management plan to increase productivity).

Besides acting as scabs, members of SLICA enjoy the best positions (that is to say, not the food preparation positions where the working conditions are tough), those where they bring the dishes to aircraft for which wages are comfortable (€2,500 per month), low real working hours (4 hours a day on average), and where fringe benefits are substantial (10% of the food is stolen). When some people have been caught, management has been very lenient towards the guilty people.

BALANCE

For several decades, many mayors from right and left, have been buying batches of votes and, more generally, peace in neighbourhoods by using and promoting religious communitarianism, even condoning the criminal practices of some of these associations and groups. In factories, in the same period, the only real problem was the right to pray at the workplace for workers claiming to be Muslim. This caused tensions among the workers: the refusal in the name of state secularism has pushed some in a religious direction. But in times of strikes the labour front has often been reconstituted through a united fight.

However, there had never previously been a successful example such as Servair where the group of workers claiming Sunni Islam established not only a daily pressure against those deemed outsiders but acted as strike-breakers, being paid in return with employer sinecures. This poses a real problem for workers faced with these practices: how to tackle and reduce this reactionary bloc within them? The answer is not simple but can be structured in several ways. Relentlessly denounce these anti-worker practices that are objectively playing the game of the bosses, ensure self-defence of the most vulnerable workers (women, workers belonging to other minorities) to break the de facto *omerta* imposed, criticize the religious basis of these fascist practices without falling into defence of the religion of secularism, go on the offensive. This is not easy today, but it's the only way.

Islamofascism in places of reproduction: the example of Molenbeek

Where are we talking about?

Molenbeek is not a suburb or a peripheral area but a district which is part of Brussels, what is called the Brussels-Capitale Region in administrative terms. It's rather as if people considered the nineteenth *arrondissement* of Paris to be a suburb... Of the 19 districts that make up Brussels-Capitale, Molenbeek is among the most densely populated, with more than 16,000 inhabitants/km² and 96,600 inhabitants. With a relatively young population (36 years old on average), it is also the part of Brussels with the highest level indicators of poverty: unemployment for the under-25s is more than 36%, life expectancy is the lowest in Brussels (78.9 years on average), in 2013, the average income per person was €10,069 per year (more than 40% less than the national average).

An industrial past

Molenbeek takes its Flemish name from Molen (mill) and Beek (watercourse, stream) testifying to its rural past. The opening of a coal canal linking Brussels to Charleroi (1832) along with the development of the railway nearby (1835 and 1872) contributed to the industrial and demographic development of the district. The main sectors of employment would be metalworking, food processing, woodworking, confectionery, mechanical engineering... From 1845 until its height in 1950, the number of wage earners went from 967 to 12,692, from around 8% of the population of Molenbeek in 1845 to almost 20% in 1947. Along with this industrial expansion, went the growth of the working population living in horrific housing conditions.

It is in this context that the Ligue Ouvrière de Molenbeek was created (1884), rapidly becoming attached to the Parti Ouvrier Belge (ancestor of the Parti Socialiste). The POB officially participated in the municipal authority from 1899, conjointly with the liberals.

From the 1960s to now

The electoral history of the district is marked by this alternation between Socialists and Liberals. However, the left and the right often governed together. This is explained partly by the dual nature of the district. What some call “high” Molenbeek or “new” Molenbeek is very little marked by the industrial history. These old farmlands and swamps were converted in the 1960s by an entrepreneur close to the Socialist mayor of the time, E. Machtens. These neighbourhoods mostly housed a Belgian population with higher incomes than the inhabitants of “old” Molenbeek with its industrial past. The “high” area is the electoral heartland of the right, while “historic Molenbeek” is the base for the Socialists. The social gap between the “old” and the “new” (and even with the rest of Brussels) can be seen as starting with the local industrial decline, which saw the number of industrial workplaces go from 649 in 1961 to 175 in 1991 ... transforming the social composition of the working class neighbourhoods, the workers of yesterday being replaced by a reserve army, and then stagnant supernumeraries on the way to “lumpenproletarianisation”, creating a social division of space.

Starting from the 1960s, workers whose wages had risen left Molenbeek for other places such as the better off suburbs. It’s important to understand that the phenomenon of suburbanisation of Brussels was the opposite of that in many other European cities, in that those who remained in the centre of the city were those who didn’t have the means to acquire property (a house with a garden, a car...) on the urban periphery.

The former workers’ neighbourhoods, mostly abandoned by their previous occupants, have been taken over by new ones. However, despite the arrival of this new population, Brussels continued to be depopulated during the 2000s.

A history of immigration

The sectors of heavy industry in Belgium in the twentieth century which lacked workers had to call on immigrants, mostly from Poland and Italy. After importing Spanish and Greek workers, Belgium turned to Morocco in 1964. In 1974, the national borders were “closed”, and unskilled workers would no longer be recruited to the same extent. These immigrants had played not only an economic role but also a demographic one in the aging country. Following the slowdown of the industrial sector in the 1970s, the Moroccan immigrants settled more in the cities than previous waves of immigrants had done. Thus, the workers’ neighbourhoods of Molenbeek, considered as rather seedy, would provide a welcome to the men coming notably to dig the Brussels Metro.

In occupying the area the Moroccans little by little marked the urban space with their cultural signifiers (type of shops, associations, places of worship...), but without, in this first phase, posing a problem of “integration”.

In 1984, the new nationality law came in, making it easier to get Belgian nationality. From now on it would be a matter of attracting this electorate by creating lists of candidates of Moroccan origin, supporting the community, even going as far as Socialist candidates (such as P. Moureaux) campaigning in the mosques. The possibilities of family regroupment and following waves of regularisation of immigration status had the effect of growing this electorate.

Muslim territory?

Molenbeek contains more than 34,000 Muslims (39.3% of the population of the town) and 22 mosques. The Moroccan population essentially considers itself Muslim (from 73% to 95% depending on the study) and many shops have bilingual signage (French-Arabic).

However, reality is more complicated than these visible features, where you can observe that the believers exercise a form of spiritual shopping in their effective faith in which less than 5% of Belgo-Maroccans say they are influenced by an imam. What’s more, more than half of them don’t go to the mosque more than once a month. Religious references are very common but rigorous religious practice seems to be far from the real life of the majority, although, more and more, the marks of religious belonging develop along with communitarian reaction.

Also called Little Manchester, in reference to its industrial past, lower Molenbeek or even historic Molenbeek, it is the neighbourhood with the highest rate of unemployment in the district, over 50% among young people (18-24). Housing is composed mostly of aging and dilapidated workers' housing, often subdivided into units by floor. A few blocks of social housing make up a fifth of the supply, a supply which remains well below the demand on the regional level (around 40,000 are on the waiting list for the whole of Brussels).

In contrast with the neighbourhoods of high Molenbeek, this area accepted the first Belgo-Moroccan families arriving in 1960-70, following a policy of hiring, regularisation and family reunion. The question of religion was posed less for the first generation of Moroccan immigrants and that was without there being any real policy of integration other than by wage labour. Towards 1975, restrictions on immigration (the end of automatic family regroupment, policies of closure) and then the downgrading on the labour market, above all for the second generation, were experienced as a racism which gave birth to an "anti-Belgian" counter-racism and a communitarian reaction.

This new context, economic as much as ideological, would mark the social and cultural dynamic of the area, more and more characterised by an identitarian response, the generalisation of veil wearing being one of the most visible indicators. In this gloomy context of economic recession came the development of an economy of getting by, a black economy built on the ruins of previously stable waged social relations. The development of the illegal economy went hand in hand with the "lumpenproletarianisation" of part of the population and more particularly the young, affected by a high rate of unemployment. This break between the first generation and the following ones created an ideal moment for ideologies of reaction and frustration to become rooted there: communitarianism, tribalism, traditionalism etc.

Into this process of communitarian response entered a political Islam more and more virulent, an organised Islam which attempted to conquer civil society by occupying both public and private space. Thus, in this neighbourhood which became a "ghetto", social and religious homogeneity was reinforced by the clientelism of local government which saw an electorate easy to manipulate and seduce. To do this, the Islamo-leftists of the Molenbeek Socialist Party didn't hesitate to cross certain lines, going far enough to irritate their secular progressive wing as is shown by the cancellation of the conference on "Zionism" in 2013. The cancellation was due to the anti-Semitic character of a proposed poster which made great publicity for the Islamo-fascists and an opportunity offered to the local councillors to consolidate their electorate in a more and more crude anti-Semitism, thus confirming the bridges built between Islamo-fascism and Islamo-leftism. Always with the same perspective of harmonisation, associations have obtained subsidies and have progressively formed, over the last twenty years or so, a veritable spider's web; a network which maintains a social fabric of a communitarian and religious type through cafés, mosques, shops, koranic schools, Arabic lessons, sports halls... screens for religious proselytising (although we should note the recent dismantling of around a hundred of these associations in Molenbeek).

Today

Political Islam has thus been organised in Molenbeek for at least 20 years. It forms the compost for the growth of a more violent Islam, as is shown by the personal trajectories of various recent figures in Jihadism. For the Salafist variant, the Belgian Islamic Centre (CIB), led since the beginning of the 2000s by the Franco-Syrian sheik Ayachi Bassam, was the place of concentration and a channel for recruitment by Al Qaeda. Abdessatar Dahmane, one of the killers of commandant Massoud lived in Molenbeek for a long time before leaving for Afghanistan. More recently, Hassan El Hadri, backer of the attacks in Madrid in 2004 just like Medhi Nemmouch, the anti-Semitic killer at the Jewish museum, also lived in Molenbeek. Finally, long before the Paris attacks in 2015, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, an important figure of Islamic State and backer of these latest mass killings had the occasion to hang out with Salah and Brahim Abdelsam while they were in low Molenbeek.

Islam becomes the pretext for the Islamo-fascist mob to ennoble their new cause as is shown by an interview in which a journalist, two months undercover in Molenbeek, asks a young dealer if he thinks of himself as a victim of circumstances. The response is at least clear: "Even if the Belgians

give us work, we would refuse it. It is too late! (...) The real victims are the Belgians. Truth be told, I feel sorry for them. Every morning, they are in traffic jams, they have to do what their bosses tell them, and in the end, they can hardly manage at the end of the month. (...) Poor people... we have it better: we work on the black, not too many hours, we don't pay a euro in taxes. No problem, what (...) you can't imagine all the stuff which we deal in here: drugs, cars, papers, all kinds of contraband. You won't die of hunger in Molenbeek.¹⁹

This response cocks a snook at all the sociologists and other specialists who consider the young delinquents in a charitable and simplistic manner as “oppressed victims” or “excluded”. Making excuses for such an unprincipled choice, as if it is not the lure of easy money, the small-time dealer justifies it by a deep contempt for the proletariat. In that way he becomes an ideal target for the recruiters who only have to stimulate his cowardice, his stupidity and his sense of identity. Before eventually transforming themselves into human bombs, these little gangsters are the executioners of their own community by playing the game of racial division, social control and violence towards women. Confined to their homes as evening falls, absent from the cafés and other spaces reserved for males, women pay a high price and are the first victims. The only possible response, to put an end to the Islamo-fascists, is for the inhabitants to fight against them themselves, there where they flourish, attacking their businesses, taking back the spaces which were previously under their control and doing this without expecting any help from the state and its police.

The practice of rackets, egregious and violent robberies committed against the weakest, anti-Semitism, anti-white racism, all these are the ignoble traits shared by Mehdi Nemmouche, Salah Abdelsam, Fouad Belkacem and company. Conversion to Islam is just a pretext for pursuing their aims with a veneer of legitimacy. In devoting themselves to mass killings, aimed in a cowardly manner at proletarians in cafés, public transport or public spaces, the Islamo-fascist pursues a course which they have already experienced at a lower intensity in the life of the petty gangster. In this way, like other places, the ghetto of low Molenbeek constitutes the ideal playground for reproducing the little mob which is the reserve army of Islamic State, as a pure product of the decay of social relations.

¹⁹ From “En immersion à Molenbeek” Hind Frahi éditions La Découverte, Paris, March 2016

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

WORK DOCUMENTS

N°1	Les 35 heures contre le prolétariat –Considérations liminaires sur les agitations des chômeurs	Juin 1998	gratuit
N°2	Nazisme et question ouvrière	Juin 2001	2 €
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“By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they [the workers] would certainly disqualified themselves from the initiating of any larger movement”

Karl MARX,
Wages, Prices and Profit, 1865