

**To the Forced Laborers, Irregulars and
Deserters of the Western Front**

There are no more illusions.

The London bombs have shown only one thing: the terror that western governments and capitalists have spread to every corner of the world is coming back. The terrible London explosions have brought a piece of Baghdad , Kabul and Jenin into Europe . Hatred and desperation are no longer confined to remote, exotic margins, but burst from behind the scenes into the very middle of the democratic scenario. The logic of the end that justifies the means (bringing peace to Iraq through genocide) has produced its counterblow. When 1½ million Iraqis have been slaughtered under the pretext of removing Saddam Hussein would one want to put up any objection to those who blew up fifty-four Londoners with the aim of stopping Blair's murderous politics? If it is acceptable to kill indiscriminately for oil and domination, why shouldn't it be acceptable kill indiscriminately to free one's land from foreign oppression? What do the professionals of terror have to scold these much smaller carriers of death about? The exceptional event in London is an everyday reality in Jerusalem and Bassora. What these vampires of all consciousness are saying, at bottom, is that one western death is worth more than a thousand Arab deaths. Who is moralizing to whom? Ah now... western values. We have seen them in Abu Gharaib, Fallujah and Guantanamo .

There are no more illusions.

Not having wanted or known how to disassociate practically from their warmongering governments, western populations are exposing themselves to bloody reprisals. The war is also here – this is no longer just an anti-militarist slogan. It is a truth as cold as a corpse. They tell us that the next objective may be an Italian city. Yes, it might be. Clearly they are well aware of what the responsibilities of the Italian government are in the slaughter in Iraq , just as they know that it will be some random people at risk of being blown up here as well. "We will never change our way of life," Blair declared after the July 7 bombings. He then added in the middle of August: "We will not accept all this foolishness/nonsense about the bombings being linked in any way with what the English are doing in Iraq or Afghanistan , or with support to Israel , or with support to America , or all the rest. This is nonsense and we should treat it as such." [I could not find the precise quote in English, so this is a paraphrase. - translator]. All those who oppose the war are attentive.

There are no more illusions.

Unfortunately, as Blair claimed, not even the bombs of London have changed the way of life. On the contrary, a wave of racism has spread against immigrants in general and Arabs in particular, with dozens of shops burned and several young men lynched. The Brazilian, Jean Charles de Menezes, who the police gunned down in the Underground because they suspected him of being an attacker, was simply registered in the cold calculation of those lost in the "struggle against terrorism". On the other front, bookshops of muslim pacifists are searched, books against the war seized as "anti-western", offices of cultural association closed, lists of suspected journalists drawn up. Precisely like after September 11, the most freedom-killing

laws against immigrants and dissidents were approved with the usual mass media coverage. Italy, in tow.

There are no more illusions.

The so-called "Pisanu package", i.e., the July 27, 2005 legal decree n. 144, that then became law to all intents and purposes, contains urgent measure for the battle against international terrorism. Through article 270 *sixies*, the following definition of terrorism is introduced: "Behaviors are deemed to have the aim of terrorism when they, by their nature or context, could cause serious damage to a country or an international organization and are carried out with the objective of intimidating the population or compelling public powers or international organizations to perform or abstain from performing any act, or destabilizing or destroying basic political, constitutional, economic and social structures of a country or a political organization." Then isn't it terrorist to intimidate the Iraqi population with bombings, torture and death squads? On the other hand, aren't demonstrations and strikes generally organized to compel "public powers" to perform or abstain from some act (for example to demand the withdrawal of troops from Iraq)? While state and multinational terrorism is hidden, every form of real dissent, every attempt to destabilize a murderous political, economic and social organization is defined as terrorist.

There are no more illusions.

It is obvious which enemies this new law distinguishes. Every immigrant is considered a potential terrorist. If s/he will collaborate with the police in the "struggle against terrorism", s/he will be able to get the permit or residence papers. Otherwise, on the basis of mere suspicion, s/he could be immediately expelled, even if s/he has her/his documents in order. According to a logic of rewards and punishments that spreads from prison to the entire society, the ultimatum addressed to immigrants is clear: either be informers to use or criminals to expel. But the rest is valid for anyone who calls the present social organization into question. Identifying anyone suspected of "terrorism" is now possible through the implementation of coercive hair and saliva sampling, of course, "with respect to the personal dignity of the subject" (article 10), while the punishment for mere possession of a fake passport is redoubled (from one to four years, and able to be increased by a third to a half if one manufactures it for oneself or is holding it not for personal use). Anyone who violates special surveillance, legal requirements or the prohibition to reside may be arrested, even outside of cases of flagrancy, with a foreseeable punishment of one to five years (art.14). Then, on the basis of mere suspicion, money, shops and goods can be seized. Furthermore, police detention is extended from twelve to twenty-four hours (thus modifying a law enacted after the murder of the anarchist Pinelli in a police station). While the period for archiving everyone's telephone and computer traffic will be lengthened up to five years (with an increase in the amount of many allocated for telephone and environmental wiretapping, in a country that spends a higher percentage to that end than even the United States), it will be necessary sooner or later to show an identification card to use the internet in any business or

public location – in short, a mass filing system. The practice of infiltration by judiciary police officers, whose powers are nearly unlimited, is made official. Police tasks are entrusted to the army and even security guards. These are some of the measures that the right introduce and the respectable left immediately approved and described as reasonable (when they didn't consider them as actually too limited). As soon as they were passed, in Lombard alone, fifty-two immigrants were expelled in one day.

There are no more illusions.

Pisanu's declarations about the Centers of Temporary Residence (CPTs) – the concentration camps in which immigrants without documents get locked up – as a tool in the struggle against "terrorism" are typical, as are his references to those who "foment" revolts and escapes. The foreign enemy becomes confused with the internal enemy, the "barbarian" with the revolutionary, both threats that civilization must smother. Don't the decisions to increase punishment (up to two years) and the proposal for allowing the arrest of anyone wearing a burqa, chador or "protective helmet" head in this direction? The one who goes into the street determined not to retreat before potential police charges and the faceless Foreigner merge into a single hysteria about security, a single declaration of war.

It is considered nonsense – a nonsense that is madness, a madness that is crime – to maintain that the bombs of Madrid and London were a response to massacres that western troops carried out in the Middle East, whereas it is sensible to state that one who wants to carry out an attack goes around wearing a burqa (so much for not attracting attention) or without documents (so much for passing calmly through checkpoints). It is obvious to anyone who does not share the sensibility of a head of state or an interior minister that no police protection is possible against one who, full of hate and desperation, is willing to carry out the simplest military action, striking indiscriminately. Against one who is not afraid of blowing himself up – thus, becoming a "martyr", i.e., a testimony – there is no device or apparatus that holds. All these police measures only serve to show muscle and, above all, to justify greater social control and repress any unconformable thought or behavior. An armored society does not permit criticism. However, the barbarian doesn't come from a terrifying and incomprehensible Elsewhere, but flows from the most technological of civilizations. There is no shelter against the only enemy that we don't want to look in the face: our way of life.

May sorrow transform into awareness, may awareness become the obstinate refusal to go on this way. Because this way one dies.

There are no more illusions.

Statesmen, with thin smiles and impeccable clothes, send soldiers to bomb an entire population from the altitude of their high-tech airplanes an entire population, slaughtering men, women and children, causing hundreds of thousands of deaths. Some young people – human beings, this variable unforeseen by military and multinational staffs – blow themselves up to avenge their loved ones and the future that

they didn't have. In the shelter of their bodyguards and newspapers, our statesmen explain to an audience of frightened civilized people that the kamikazes are fanatics and cowards. It is like this: cowards are not those who play with the lives of millions of people from their safe position, but rather those who are willing to kill and be killed rather than living (or knowing that others live) in the midst of barbed wire and wreckage. This scene sums up one of the crudest lies that the Ministries of Propaganda and Fear have ever had effrontery to tell. A lie that depicts quite well, in a ruthless act of accusation, the current decay of awareness, the fearful gap between the horror that surrounds us and consequences that we are able to draw from it.

There are no more illusions.

For millions of the damned of the earth, pushed down to the threshold of survival by market disasters, the kamikaze has become a figure of redemption [According to my dictionary, the Italian word here, *riscatto*, can mean either "redemption" or "liberation". In each instance where it is used, I choose the meaning that seems best to fit the context. – tr.]. This is what this world devoured by the cancer of domination and money has managed to do.

But indiscriminate violence against western people is also a sign of the defeat of struggles for social emancipation, the failure of practical solidarity among the exploited of the planet against their common exploiters. The possibility of revolutionary violence – against the oppressors and never against the oppressed – is being replaced with the blindest violence, fury that does not distinguish between governors and those governed, between ministers and subway commuters. Examining it well, it is a most grotesque and terrifying parody of the struggles that, from Iran to Nicaragua, from Italy to the United States passing through South Africa, shook the order of war and exploitation in the 1970s.

The London bombs don't just speak to us of Middle Eastern masters (sheikhs, financial speculators, big property owners) that move sacrificial pawns over the chessboard of a war to defend their power and oil. They also, above all, speak to us of the poor who, isolated in their search for liberation, abandoned by their brothers and sisters in the West, see an imperialist in every white person. Of the poor who, in searching for a redemption that often has quite little to do with religion, find in combatant Islam a community with which to identify. Of the poor who are joined – as we have recently seen – by other attackers a bit better off, born and raised in the West, but linked by religion and culture to lands and people tormented by the war. Only the experience of common revolt will restore to the word comradeship its most authentic meaning. Experience that will ripen among the same ruins that gave birth to the kamikaze, by transforming that desperate disposition toward conflict into a radically different struggle. There, the awareness of a humanity three quarters drowned awaits us. It is already too late for lessons in civic education.

There are no more illusions.

Democratic safeguards are a torn up fig leaf.

The “war on terrorism” is the most fitting form of global conflict of the division of power and the last energy resources that mobilizes and militarizes the entire society. The “terrorist” is everywhere, inside as well as outside the borders: it might be the immigrant, the dissident or the “rogue state” with “its” population. The enemy has no exact form precisely because it is absolute Evil. This is why the war is total, and the means those of annihilation. “Annihilation therefore becomes completely abstract and absolute. It is no longer turned against an enemy, but is now in the service of a supposed objective affirmation of the highest values – for which, as everybody knows, no price is too high” (Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*). The collaborator of yesterday (Saddam Hussein, Bin Laden...) becomes the terrorist of today.

This is the context into which the new repressive measures are inserted against the “internal enemy”: the enemy without documents, without face or with a protective helmet.

There are no more illusions.

Democracy reveals its real function when viewed on the planetary scale. Then one will discover a minority of “free citizens” surrounded by a mass of slaves compelled into forced labor. The ancient Greek city is now the entire world; except that the food is poisoned, police are everywhere and the free plaza (the *agora*) nowhere. In this sense, Israeli democracy is increasingly an outpost of what the society in which we live is becoming. A society under siege, with the army at the entrance of theaters and restaurants. A society that, in dehumanizing foreigners, has dehumanized itself. A society that has fallen prey to the obsessive fear of attacks – repercussions of military occupation, raids, deportations and slaughter – and is incapable of calling our way of life into question. A society in which emergency law by decree is the very mode of governing. A society in which the reference to nuclear destruction is now a mere journalistic metaphor.

There are no more illusions.

A few days ago, in a working class neighborhood in Turin, and unknown citizen took a shot at the head of an African boy from the window of his apartment. It was an air rifle, but the boy was still at risk of dying. As soon as he was discharged from the hospital, Ali was deported. Although he had no drugs, according to the press he was a “pusher”. The police strengthened controls at the expense of immigrants. A citizens’ committee started a petition to demand the iron fist against petty criminality. And not even an innocuous, generic, democratic word of condemnation for the shooting. Jerusalem is right next door.

There are no more illusions.

A hurricane, and now it is civil war. While New Orleans is submerged in water and mud, with hundreds of deaths and a population that lost everything, the government suspends the dispatch of aid, immediately afterwards entrusting the management of public order to soldiers who’d just returned from Iraq. “Anyone who loots supermarkets will be shot on sight.”

There are no illusions.

The withdrawal of troops from Iraq and the closure of the concentration camps for undocumented immigrants is the indispensable minimum that our struggles must force out. If it wants to be consistent, practical solidarity against repression is now a critique of the very foundations of the state and capital. Today, one cannot speak of war without speaking of expulsions or prisons, and vice versa. "Fomenting" revolt and escape from CPTs is a task which reality takes on much more freely than revolutionaries. Organizing self-defense against the cops, learning courage, going on the attack, changing our lives together – here, beyond labels, acronyms, groups rhetoric, is the only concrete comradeship, the most beautiful challenge hurled against that "crowd of lonely people" that we still call society.

While humanity crawls between the emptiest "well-being" and the crudest poverty, while the civilized flounder among cataclysms that have very little "natural" about them, locked in their traps of armored cement, the ancient dream of placing everything in common, of freeing the experience of the world and of our likes from the mediation of power and money, becomes the only promise of happiness, the only concrete hope of liberation.

September 2005

Some internal enemies

Guerra Sociale (2002-2010)
critica libertaria al capitalismo

To the Forced Laborers, Irregulars and Deserters of the Western Front

guerrasociale.anarchismo.net